

**AN EXAMINATION OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION PRE-SERVICE
STUDENT TEACHERS' EXPLANATORY STYLE, BELIEFS AND
EXPECTATIONS ABOUT TEACHING, AND
STRENGTHSFINDER® PROFILES**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of

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in

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Katie Logan Cooper was born in Salmon, Idaho on June 2, 1979. She is the daughter of David J. and Merry B. Logan. She graduated from Salmon High School, Salmon, Idaho in 1997, completed her Bachelors at Montana State University in 2002 and her Master's degree requirements for Agricultural Education in 2004 from Montana State University.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine levels of optimism and pessimism along with the beliefs and expectations of teaching in agricultural education pre-service teachers, and to compare these findings to that of the Gallup Organization's StrengthsFinder® profiles. The states included in this study were Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

The data for this study was collected using web based survey instruments. The population consisted of 61 pre-service agricultural education students. These students were enrolled in an agricultural education teaching methods class during the Fall 2002 semester, and planned on student teaching in a high school agricultural education program during the Spring or Fall 2003 semesters. A demographic survey, the Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching, and the Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire (AASQ) were posted on a web site. The StrengthsFinder® instrument was used by providing each respondent a copy of the book, *Now, Discover Your Strengths* (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001) and was found at a Gallup organization web site.

Overall, respondents believed that they will perform better at the teaching tasks as outlined in the Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching than their peers. Only three respondents were excessively pessimistic and only five respondents were overly optimistic as reported by the results of the AASQ. The top five first strengths on the StrengthsFinder® profile as reported by the respondents were: "Adaptability", "Input", "Achiever", "Learner" and "Developer". Collectively, when the respondents were examined by looking at all three questionnaires, no overly pessimistic theme strengths were identified as measured by the AASQ and the Beliefs and Expectations surveys. A regression analysis, using a step-wise method was conducted. Only one independent variable, "scholarship" had a significant influence on the AASQ scores. StrengthsFinder® themes "Intellection", "Relator", and "Woo" were identified as being overly optimistic, as measured by the AASQ. All groups felt that they would perform better than their peers at the teaching tasks presented by the Beliefs and Expectations instrument except the StrengthsFinder® theme "Restorative". This group scored a 0.00, meaning the respondents think they will perform the same as their peers.

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

All agricultural education teachers go through “tough times”. The experience of student teaching is considered to be the first test, and for some teachers, it may be their “toughest time”. The ability to get along with faculty, staff, parents, and classroom management can be affected by one’s level of optimism or pessimism. Knowing which pre-service teachers are more optimistic or pessimistic and comparing this fact to demographic variables and their *beliefs and expectations* about teaching can add insight into the teacher recruitment process, student advising process, and complement the results of the StrengthsFinder® profile.

The optimistic or pessimistic orientation inherent to an individual can affect one’s motivation, perseverance, and determination. Martin Seligman found that people offer a somewhat consistent way of explaining why different events happen, which he calls *explanatory style* (Buchanan and Seligman, 1995). More exactly, Seligman (1995) explained that *explanatory style* describes the way that people explain the causes of bad or good events involving themselves along three dimensions. The first of these is the extent to which the explanation is internal (“It’s me”) versus external (“It’s someone else”). The second dimension is the stable (“It’s going to last forever”) versus the unstable (“It’s short-lived”) dimension. The third dimension is the global (“It’s going to affect everything that happens to me”) versus the specific (“It’s only going to influence

this”) dimension. *Explanatory style* is a reliable method of determining someone’s optimistic or pessimistic tendencies. Someone’s *explanatory style* is but one of several influences on the actual causal explanation that people offer. In part, this is because the consistency of one’s *explanatory style* appears to be an individual difference in its own right (Seligman, 1995).

Another component of this study will be to identify and describe the *beliefs and expectations* about teaching of pre-service teachers. Weinstein (1988) found that many messages that society and teacher-education programs, themselves, convey to pre-service teachers encourage unrealistic expectations about teaching. For example, a potential student teacher candidate might consider himself or herself fit to teach because he or she enjoyed babysitting when in high school. This has implications for unrealistic optimism in agricultural education teachers as well. For example, if a pre-service agricultural education student works at a FFA leadership camp during the summer, he or she may consider this experience to be equivalent to teaching in a high school setting and, therefore, be unrealistically optimistic about the formal teaching experience.

The Gallup Organization has spent an innumerable amount of time and money determining how a person’s individual strengths can be measured. The basis for this research was formed from the notion that an organization can become more effective by capitalizing on each individual’s strengths, rather than his or her weaknesses, and thus each employee will be much more efficient and successful. Over the last thirty years the Gallup Organization has conducted a systematic study of excellence. From this research and information, thirty-four patterns or “themes” were identified. A test was developed

that measures an individual on each of these themes. Upon completion of the test, a report of the top five themes is given to the respondent.

Teacher education can benefit from knowing more about the *beliefs and expectations* about teaching that student teachers possess. In addition, individual student teacher strengths, as identified by the Gallup StrengthsFinder® profile can assist teacher educators in the placement of student teachers, selection of specific student teaching experiences, and aid in advice given to graduates who are seeking their first teaching position. This knowledge, coupled with the effect optimism and pessimism have on a realistic orientation to teaching, can augment the university pre-service teaching experience.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine levels of optimism and pessimism along with the *beliefs and expectations* of teaching in agricultural education pre-service student teachers, and to compare these findings to that of the Gallup Organization's StrengthsFinder® profile. The states included in this study were Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

Need for the Study

Seligman and Schulman (1986) conducted research that has assisted major life insurance companies in selecting more successful salespeople. Sales agents with an optimistic *explanatory style* sold more insurance than those with a pessimistic

explanatory style. Furthermore, *explanatory style* better discriminated between high and low producers in the second year than in the first year. This speaks to the theory that *explanatory style* becomes a better predictor of performance as time goes on and negative events accumulate. As discussed previously, all education programs want to graduate students in the teaching profession who are prepared and will lead successful careers. By understanding the relationships between optimism and performance in these pre-service teachers, teacher educators will have one more tool for recruiting and retaining successful teacher candidates.

Seligman and Schulman's research relates to the teaching profession. In teaching, knowledge and meaningful learning experiences are the "commodities" that are sold by the sales agent (teacher). Knowing the *explanatory style* of future teachers may help predict their ability to succeed long-term. It may assist university educators with the documentation needed for consultation and mediation with those teachers who begin to teach, but whose *explanatory styles* are found to be negative (pessimistic).

Pellatiro (1989) contended that American vocational-technical schools need teachers who exhibit positive professional attitudes. A positive attitude is generally conceived as a state of readiness to respond effectively in challenging situations. This need for teachers who exhibit positive professional attitudes is further investigated by Smith and Edmunds (1995). They discussed the many vocational and educational acts that have stemmed from political and business leaders' recent recognition and acknowledgement of the need to better prepare students for the workplace. If the results of this study can direct teacher educators toward better preparation of students by

identifying their *explanatory style* and directing their education accordingly, the entire teaching profession will benefit.

Hall and Smith (1999) found that “no studies were found that explored explanatory style and educators” (p. 3). Upon completion of their study, they concluded that their work should begin the dialogue in education concerning explanatory style.

The results of this study should yield more knowledge and insight as to which teachers are more optimistic and have the appropriate *beliefs and expectations* about teaching. In turn, the results from the comparison of survey data will be able to assist recruiters of agricultural education teachers with selection of those individuals whose *explanatory style* and belief in teaching are more aligned with teachers who are successful.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to determine the following about pre-service student teachers in agricultural education programs in the western states of Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah and Washington:

- (1) Their *beliefs and expectations* about teaching
- (2) Their *explanatory style* (optimism vs. pessimism)
- (3) Their StrengthsFinder® profiles, and to
- (4) Compare the *beliefs and expectations* about teaching and the *explanatory style* (optimism vs. pessimism) to the StrengthsFinder® Profiles.

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions existed for this study:

- 1) Students respond honestly about their perceptions of events and their *beliefs and expectations* about teaching.
- 2) The survey instruments used in this study are a reliable method for collecting the data necessary for analysis with this specific population.
- 3) Optimism vs. pessimism affects an individual's ability to perform.
- 4) Pre-conceived beliefs about teaching, combined with an individual's level of optimism, will affect an individual's ability to perform as a teacher.
- 5) Identifying an individual's strengths will allow him or her to adapt his or her performance as a teacher.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations exist for this study:

- 1) The survey population was limited to agricultural education methods students in the western states of Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, and Washington who student taught during the spring or fall semesters of 2003.
- 2) Surveys were administered on the World Wide Web and responses were collected using Microsoft Access.
- 3) The surveys were administered in the months of November and December 2002.

Definitions of the Study

- 1) Explanatory Style: the tendency to select certain causal explanations for good and bad events (Seligman, 1984)

- 2) Beliefs and Expectations About The First Year of Teaching: a 33-item questionnaire developed based on Veenman's (1984) list of the most frequently perceived problems of beginning teachers (Weinstein, 1988)
- 3) StrengthsFinder®: an instrument developed by the Gallup Organization designed to identify 5 strengths or themes for each respondent out of a possible list of 34 (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001)
- 4) Optimism: an inclination to put the most favorable construction upon actions and events or to anticipate the best possible outcome (Merriam and Webster, 2003)
- 5) Pessimism: an inclination to emphasize adverse aspects, conditions, and possibilities or to expect the worst possible outcome (Merriam and Webster, 2003)
- 6) Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire (AASQ): an instrument designed by Peterson and Barrett (1987) consisting of 12 negative events that occur in academic settings (Hessling, Anderson, and Russell, 2002)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The Review of Literature is presented in three sections. The first section addresses the *beliefs and expectations* about student teaching. The second section discusses *explanatory style*. The third section presents information on the StrengthsFinder® instrument and research.

Literature and research pertaining to *explanatory style*, optimism, *beliefs and expectations*, and the resulting effect that these factors have on personal performance is summed up by Anderson and Weiner (1992). They reason:

“Everyday interactions with other people and environments consist of a complex mix of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. How one responds to various events, be they work-related successes (such as promotion to district manager), interpersonal failures (such as an argument with a close friend), or personal tragedies (such as the death of a spouse), largely depends on one’s interpretations and understanding of the events....They have beliefs about how the world works, about their role in it, and about their relationships with others.....With these beliefs people can predict, explain, and to a great extent control their life situations” (p 295).

Beliefs and Expectations about The First Year of Teaching

As pre-service teachers transition from the educational/training part of their experience to the “real world”, common complaints of student misbehavior, overbearing workload, and difficulty with content are heard everywhere. This transition from the

college classroom to the secondary classroom is typically characterized by this “reality shock”: the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life (Veenman, 1984).

Differing levels of optimism affect student performance as shown in a study by DeFalco and Strang (1995). Pre-service teachers who were found to be extreme optimists appeared to handle situations and assignments very differently from moderated optimists. They found that extreme optimists did a good job, but student interactions required to complete the assignments were very superficial. These pre-service teachers also exerted less effort while completing these activities. It seemed that they wanted to give a good impression, but didn’t want to commit much time or effort to the task at hand. DeFalco and Strang (1995) found that “both in action and in thought, extreme optimist’s approach to teaching seemed to be more influenced by social desirability than by thoughtfulness and personal commitment” (p. 552).

Not only does extreme optimism negatively affect student outcomes, but unrealistic optimism can as well. Based on Weinstien’s (1988) finding that “Pre-service teachers showed a consistent tendency to believe that they would experience less difficulty than the “average first year teachers,” (p. 31) researchers have come to the conclusion that it is important to ensure that pre-service teachers’ optimism is grounded in an accurate assessment of their skills and the demands of teaching. Other research by DeFalco and Strang (1995) confirmed the existence of this “optimism trait” in a cohort of pre-service teachers. The existence of an unrealistic view of teaching appears to have implications for teacher education. If these students believe that teaching is relatively

easy and expect little difficulties with the transition from student to teacher, a tendency of lack of motivation to become seriously engaged in teacher preparation begins to surface (Book, Byers, and Freeman, 1983).

This tendency of pre-service teachers to have *beliefs and expectations* about teaching that may differ from reality is affected by several factors. Muller-Fohrbrodt, Cloetta, and Dann (1978), found that possible explanations range from personal causes to situational causes. These explanations are further documented by Weinstein (1998) to include the way teaching is perceived in our society, as well as the structure and content of teacher education itself. Weinstein (1998) goes on to say, “It seems likely that the ordeal experienced by many first-year teachers stems from unrealistic expectations about the difficulty of teaching in general and about their own ability to deal successfully with the demands of the classroom in particular” (p. 32).

These unrealistic expectations usually come from previous experiences that the students have had with children. A whole trend of studies (Anderson and Weiner, 1992; Muller-Fohrbrodt, Cloetta, and Dann, 1978; Weinstein, 1988; Book, Byers and Freeman, 1983; DeFalco and Strang, 1995) were undertaken to look at this subject. These studies have indicated that optimistic bias is often introduced when people extrapolate from their past experiences to estimate their future vulnerability. Pre-service teachers may extrapolate from previous childcare situations in which they were successful to conclude that they will experience a similar environment when teaching. Book et al. (1983) noted that previous experiences with children might intensify the tendency to underestimate the difficulty of teaching. They found that eighty percent of the pre-service teachers they

surveyed had had first-hand experience with children. Although these subjects were in beginning (entry level) education classes, twenty-four percent reported that they were ready to teach children without any further preparation. Another sixty-six percent conveyed that they were moderately confident in their teaching abilities. Book, et al. (1983) also found that the “view of teaching as an extended form of parenting may be the nemesis which diminishes pre-service teachers’ valuing of pedagogy courses and professional attitudes” (p. 10).

These experiences may cause education students to believe that personality characteristics determine success. According to Weinstein (1988), pre-service elementary students who have experience in childcare situations may conclude that they have the prerequisite ability to be effective because they simply can “get along” with children. They fail to understand that these settings lack the spontaneity, multi-dimensionality, and unpredictability that make classrooms such complex environments. Anderson and Weiner (1992) found that “Many personality theorists have contended that [students] are motivated to see [themselves] in a positive light. Such a motivational interpretation of self-serving ascriptions assumes that attribution influences emotions” (p. 300).

This drive for positivism is tied in to what research has found to be an effective solution for pre-service teachers’ unrealistic optimism. DeFalco and Strang (1995) found that by using a teaching simulation as part of the educational experience, pre-service teachers gained experience in working with pupils who offered a variety of challenges while still remaining in a safe, positive environment. This positive environment allowed

the students to thrive, while the challenge gave them an opportunity to practice those skills that they may or may not believe are going to give them trouble. Most research suggested that pre-service teachers are most concerned, not with classroom discipline, assessing work, and relations with parents, but rather about tasks and impact (Fuller, 1975; Reeves and Kazelskis, 1985; and Evans and Tribble, 1986). These researchers also found that pre-service teachers tended to worry more about the tasks of teaching and their impact on students, which falls in line with those concerns of experienced teachers. They also noted that beginning teachers tended to worry about “self” or survival concerns.

Explanatory Style

Buchanan and Seligman (1995) relate the undue worry about teaching to what they call *explanatory style*. This cognitive personality variable reflects how people habitually explain the causes of events. It focuses on individual differences in people’s thoughts and beliefs and how these differences influence motivation, emotion, and behavior. The measure that is used to determine these differences by many different researchers is most often optimism.

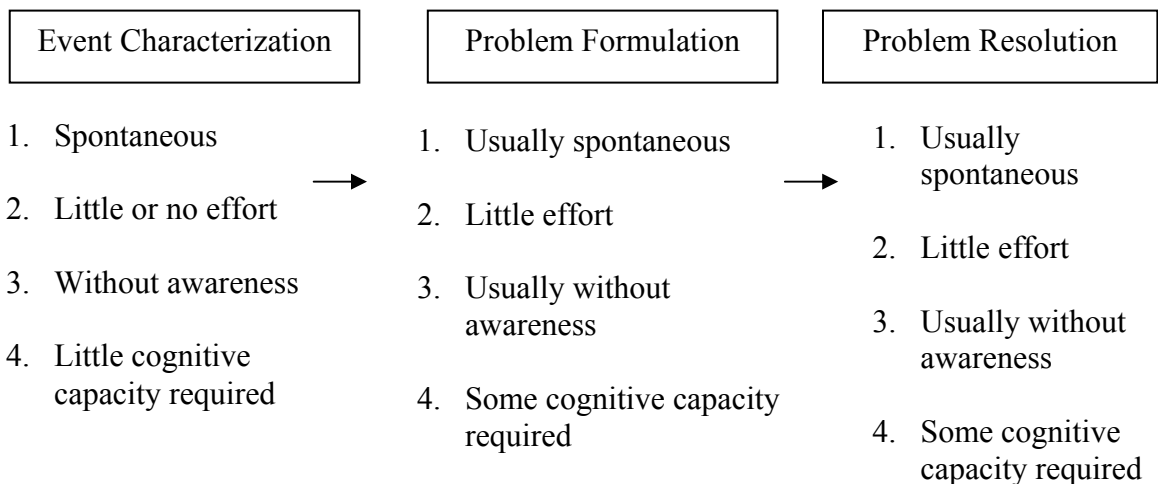
While educational research has delved into what lies behind the decisions of what does and what does not concern pre-service teachers, *explanatory style* has been used extensively in other areas. Every time an individual makes a decision concerning the causality of an event, there is a bi-directional relation between this ascription and the expectancy of success. Anderson and Weiner (1992) explained, “Just as causal

ascriptions influence subsequent expectancy, expectancy of success also has an effect on causal attributions” (p. 301).

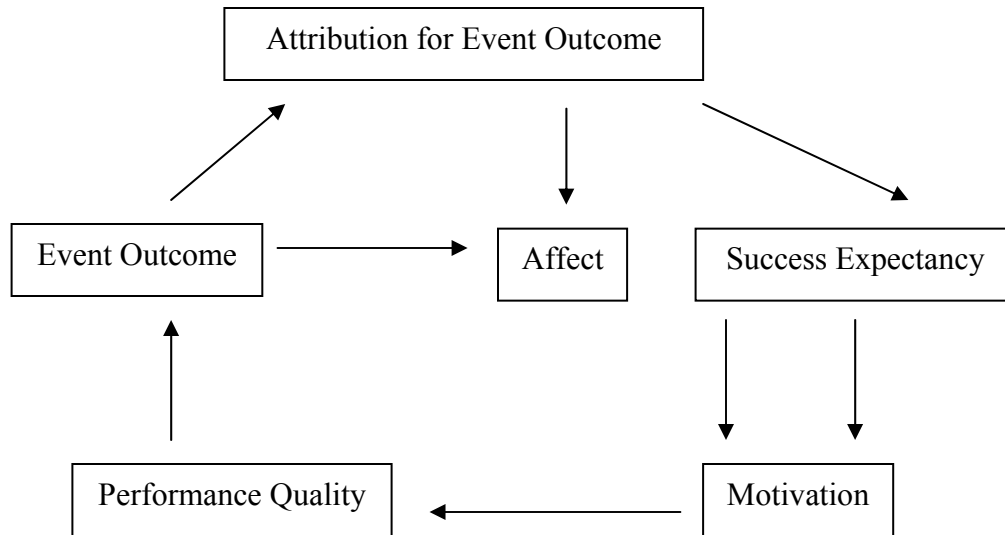
This phenomenon described as *explanatory style* has specific identified characteristics. The first feature is that attributions are frequently made quickly, spontaneously, with little or no effort, and sometimes even without awareness (Anderson and Weiner, 1992). Again, Anderson and Weiner (1992) noted that if a subject is observing a person behaving anxiously, he/she might immediately make an attribution that this is a particularly anxious person. The additional or discounted information that the person may be discussing an anxiety-inducing topic does not play a part in the attributor’s decision. This ambiguity is discussed by Peterson, Semmel, von Baeyer, Abramson, Metalsky, and Seligman (1982) who stated, “When the causes of an aversive event – real or hypothetical – are ambiguous because certain information is unavailable the reviewers believe that people’s *attributional (explanatory) style* will predict their responses to an event” (p. 278). In order to record this style, the Attributional Style Questionnaire was developed.

The second feature of attributions is that the process is a multi-stage one. Different processes are carried out at different stages. The earliest task, as mentioned above, is characterizing the event. Such characterizations not only depend upon the event, but also upon the contextual features of the situation. These contextual features can lead a person to characterizing an “interpersonal bump” as either an “intentional shove” or an “unintentional jostle”. Prior experience and expectancies will also affect this decision (Anderson and Weiner, 1992).

The next stage of *explanatory style* is some sort of problem formulation, where the question is framed and relevant data are brought to mind. The mind then integrates this information and concludes to the problem resolution stage. Again many variables, such as optimism and self-esteem, may influence this attribution process at any and all of the three stages. Individuals with high self-esteem or a more optimistic outlook will characterize an identical event very differently than those with low self-esteem or a more pessimistic outlook (Anderson and Weiner, 1992). These researchers have modeled this three-stage process as follows:



After analyzing this model, it was further developed to show the circular nature of this decision-making process. The final model (1992) is as follows:



Because this model is circular, one can begin at any point. It makes the most sense, however, to enter it after some event has occurred. The three attribution processes (event characterization, problem formulation, and problem resolution) lead to a particular causal understanding. This, in turn, affects future expectancy and can be related to motivation (Anderson and Weiner, 1992).

Future expectancy and motivation either leads people to positivism or negativism. The optimistic or pessimistic orientation inherent to an individual can affect his or her motivation, perseverance, and determination. Martin Seligman found that people offer a somewhat consistent way of explaining why different events happen, which he calls *explanatory style* (Buchanan and Seligman, 1995). More exactly, Buchanan and Seligman (1995) stated that *explanatory style* describes the way that people explain the causes of bad or good events involving themselves along three dimensions. The first of these is the extent to which the explanation is internal (“It’s me”) versus external (“It’s someone else”). The second dimension is the stable (“It’s going to last forever”) versus

the unstable (“It’s short-lived”) dimension. The third dimension is the global (“It’s going to affect everything that happens to me”) versus the specific (“It’s only going to influence this”) dimension. *Explanatory style* is a reliable method of determining someone’s optimistic or pessimistic tendencies. Someone’s *explanatory style* is but one of several influences on the actual causal explanation that people offer. In part, this is because the consistency of one’s *explanatory style* appears to be an individual difference in its own right (Buchanan and Seligman, 1995).

Specifically looking at this individual difference, Hall and Smith (1999) compared the explanatory styles of agricultural educators to those of other vocational teachers. They found that agricultural teachers had the lowest *explanatory style* scores compared to business teachers, family and consumer science teachers, and marketing teachers. All of these groups had a composite optimism score that was declared optimistic, but agricultural teachers ranked the lowest. It was also found in this study that vocational teachers react optimistically to good events, and moderately optimistically to bad events.

Further developing the idea of the three dimensions of explanatory style, Peterson et al. (1982) discussed the “locus of control”, or whether a person attributes a cause internal or external, as well as the stability and globality of attributions. The “locus of control” predicts that internal attributions, not external attributions, for bad events are associated with a subsequent loss of self-esteem. The stability of one’s answer predicts that stable attributions lead to more chronic adaptational deficits following exposure to an uncontrollable bad event. Finally, attributing a bad event to a global factor will lead to

pervasive adaptational deficits, whereas attributing the event to a more specific cause will lead to less pervasive deficits.

These deficits often lead to depression, which in turn affects performance. Seligman, Abramson, Semmel, and von Baeyer, (1979) wrote, “Depressed college students, compared to non-depressed college students, attributed bad outcomes to internal, stable, and global causes, as measured by an *attributional (explanatory) style* scale. In addition, relative to non-depressed students, depressed students attributed good outcomes to external, unstable causes” (p. 242). Peterson and Seligman (1987) found that people who offered internal, stable, and global explanations for bad events were at increased risk for morbidity and mortality. They concluded that passivity, pessimism, and low moral foreshadow disease and death. Sweeney, Anderson and Bailey (1986) found similar results. “In 104 studies involving nearly 15,000 subjects, several attributional patterns had reliable associations with depression scores” (p. 974).

When an individual experiences a misfortunate event, the way the he or she responds can give great insight into how that individual deals with every day decisions and expectations. This *explanatory style* was predicted by the reformulated helplessness model of depression. Peterson et al. (1982) connected attribution to this decision-making process. They relate that the learned helplessness model of depression stated that when faced with an uncontrollable bad event, a person will wonder why it occurred. The model goes on to suggest that how people answer the question “why?” will help determine their adaptation to the event. Victor Frankl (1992), a renowned psychiatrist, uses this theory in his work with patients. He sometimes asks his patients who suffer

from a multitude of torments great and small, “Why do you not commit suicide?” (p. 7). From their answers he often finds the guideline for his psychotherapy. Miguel-Tobal, Excalon, and Puebla (1998) have found that if a person is experiencing a high level of anxiety, or misfortune, this high level of anxiety is directly associated with performance decrements. Tying all of this back in with *explanatory style*, Anderson and Weiner (1992) stated:

“According to the attributional formulation, response to failure depends to a great extent upon the attribution made for the failure. The person will probably experience the outcome-related affects of frustration and sadness. If the failure is attributed to a lack of effort or preparation, then we may expect a fairly positive response to the failure. Because the causes are unstable and uncontrollable, the person can maintain a strong expectation of success in the future, and therefore, may feel hopeful. Because the causes are internal and controllable, the person may experience guilt and may perceive anger on the part of, say, parents and teacher. High expectations of future success, along with hopefulness and guilt, often result in an increase in motivation. On the other hand, consider the sequence if the initial failure is attributed to lack of ability, which is internal, stable, and uncontrollable. The initial outcome-related affects of sadness and frustration will be present, of course. The ability attribution adds to those negative effects by lowering self-esteem, producing low future expectancies or hopelessness, and generating feelings of shame and humiliation. If parents and teachers, say, accept this ability attribution (or foster it) they will be likely to communicate it via their pity or sorrow. These various thoughts and effects decrease achievement strivings, and often result in withdrawal (actual and psychological) from the achievement setting” (p. 314).

This complicated process of responding to these events creates predictable performance behaviors. Beginning with the first aspect of *explanatory style*, locus of control, these predicted behaviors can be seen. People with an internal locus of control are more likely to take responsibility for their actions, are not as easily influenced by others, and tend to do a better job when assigned specific tasks. By comparison, people

with an external locus of control tend to blame others for their mistakes, are readily influenced by others, and are more likely to pay more attention to the status of the opinion holder rather than the content of the assignment (Locus of Control, 2001, para 3). Seligman and Shulman (1986) found that the learned helplessness model claims that the tendency to explain bad events by internal, stable, and global causes potentiates quitting when bad events are encountered in an individual's life. Anderson and Weiner (1992) found similar results while tying these results in with future expectations. They found that following failure at a chance task (external causality), expectancies tended not to shift, but following failure at a skill task (internal causality), downward shifts in expectation of future success appeared.

So, how can all of this be analyzed in order for intervention to take place? Many researchers have found that intervention with individuals found to have a pessimistic *explanatory style* and depression helps these individuals change the way they view the world. A study was conducted with university students who were at risk for depression. These "at risk" students were defined by Seligman, Schulman, DeRubeis, & Hollon, (1999) because they fell into the most pessimistic quarter of *explanatory style*. Seligman et al. (1999) found that by providing these university students that were at risk for depression a brief and inexpensive cognitive-behavioral prevention program, these students had significantly fewer episodes of generalized anxiety disorder than the control group, and showed a trend toward fewer major depressive episodes. The group of students who participated in this workshop also had significantly fewer moderate depressive episodes and significantly fewer depressive and anxiety symptoms than the

control group. Finally, the workshop group had significantly greater improvements in explanatory style, less hopelessness, and fewer dysfunctional attitudes than the control group.

Rotter and Hochrieck (1975) also found that intervention could be of some help. However, they related that simply knowing how much an individual wants to reach a certain goal is not sufficient information for predicting behavior. While two different students' goals may be identical, when their individual expectations differ, the behavior of the two students is also likely to differ. Victor Frankl (1992) sums this up by relating this to the original idea of optimism:

“tragic optimism...an optimism in the face of tragedy and in view of the human potential which at its best allows for: (1) turning suffering into a human achievement and accomplishment; (2) deriving from guilt the opportunity to change oneself for the better; and (3) deriving from life's transitoriness an incentive to take responsible action. It must be kept in mind, however, that optimism is not anything to be commanded or ordered. One cannot even force oneself to be optimistic indiscriminately, against all odds, against all hope” p. 140).

StrengthsFinder®

The Gallup StrengthsFinder® is an assessment and feedback tool to help individuals and organizations identify strengths. The format of the instrument allows the individual who is completing the StrengthsFinder® to receive a developmental report and the organization to gain a better understanding of the strengths of the individuals within the organization. This computer based internet interview is designed to help focus an individual's attention on his or her signature themes (Walwey, 2000). Guided by the belief that good is the opposite of bad, mankind has spent thousands of years pursuing its

fixation with fault and failing. Doctors have studied disease in order to learn about health; psychologists have studied sadness in order to learn about joy; therapists have studied the causes of divorce in order to learn about marriage; schools and workplaces have studied weakness in order to learn about strength (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001). Buckingham and Clifton (2001), as well as the Gallup organization believe that this is the wrong way to go about understanding and developing strengths. They contend that strengths have their own patterns, and if an individual is to excel in a chosen field, understanding of these patterns must be accomplished.

They identify two main assumptions upon which great organizations must be built. First, the organization must not only accommodate the fact that each employee is different, but it must also capitalize on these differences. It must watch for identifiers of each employee's natural talents and then position and develop each employee so that his or her talents are transformed into greatness. Globally, only twenty percent of employees working in the large organizations surveyed by Gallup feel that they are using their strengths every day. Even more alarming, the longer an employee stays with an organization and the more dignified position that employee holds in the company, the less likely he or she is to agree that he or she is playing to his or her strengths. Even though most organizations are only operating at twenty percent capacity, this discovery actually represents a huge opportunity for organizations in the future. Imagine what could be done if this twenty percent was changed to forty or even sixty percent. The possibilities are endless (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001). This notion also applies to schools. If teacher educators and administrators can encourage pre-service and beginning teachers to

develop and enhance their strengths, improvement should be made within the school systems as well.

The second assumption that Buckingham and Clifton (2001) identified is that each person's greatest room for growth is in the areas of his or her greatest strength.

Organizations must turn their people's talents into productive powerful strengths. This can be accomplished by individualization. Each employee, or student in this case, must be treated as an individual and looked at with the attitude that each individual provides a unique set of strengths, which will become the most productive if utilized correctly.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was designed to examine the *beliefs and expectations* about teaching, the *explanatory style* (optimism vs. pessimism), and the StrengthsFinder® profiles of pre-service student teachers in agricultural education programs in the western states of Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah and Washington. The Methodology Chapter is organized into four sections: Population Description, Instrument Design, Data Collection, and Data Analysis.

Population Description

Western land grant universities were contacted to determine the scope of their agricultural education programs and to identify potential individuals for the study population. The programs in Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, and Washington agreed to participate. A total of 61 participants were identified. The population included in the study was limited to individuals meeting the following criteria:

1. Those enrolled in an agricultural education teaching methods class during the Fall 2002 semester and
2. Those students planning to student teach in a high school agricultural education program during the Spring or Fall 2003 semesters.

The pilot study was conducted using students enrolled in the College of Education who were also preparing to student teach during the Spring or Fall 2003 semesters. A total of 16 pilot study participants were identified.

Instrument Design

The research was conducted using three separate instruments. The first survey, (Appendix E) the Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire (AASQ), developed by Peterson and Barrett (1987), is a compilation of questions that present negative academic events and ask respondents to determine the cause of each event. The AASQ is based on Martin Seligman's extensive research on the subject of "Learned Optimism" (1990). The AASQ is formulated exactly after the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ), (Seligman, 1979) except that the AASQ presents participants with 12 negative hypothetical academic events, while the ASQ presents 6 positive and 6 negative events (Ritchie, 1999). After reading each negative event, respondents are asked to write down one major cause for the event. This written answer is not used in scoring, but instead allows the respondent to focus and better answer the remaining questions about the event. Refer to Appendix I for a summary of these written responses. The questions on the AASQ guide the respondent through three dimensions of optimism and pessimism (internal vs. external, stable vs. unstable, and global vs. specific) of negative events in the context of an academic environment. For example, participants were asked to respond to the hypothetical situations of the AASQ through the following instruction:

“If such a situation were to happen to you, what do you feel would have caused it? While events may have many causes, we want you to pick only one—the major cause of the event if it happened to you. Please write down this cause in the blank provided after each event” (Peterson and Barrett, 1987, p. 604).

Participants rated each hypothetical situation on a 7-point Likert-type scale based on the perceived internality, stability, and globality (as opposed to externality, instability, and specificity). To obtain the internality dimension score, the responses to part B of the twelve questions of the AASQ were summed and then divided by 12. This resulted in an average score that measures the degree of internality a respondent possesses. Parts C (stability) and D (globality) of the survey were similarly scored.

After the three mean scores were computed, these scores were averaged across the three dimensions. This provided a composite *explanatory style* score. This score ranges from 1 to 7, with 1 being optimistic and 7 being pessimistic. Individuals who possess higher *explanatory style* scores (more pessimistic) tend to look at causes from more internal, global and stable perspective. For instance, if a respondent was to have a composite score of greater than 5.0, typical responses from this respondent would reflect a higher degree of internality, stability, and globality (more pessimistic). Respondents who score 3.5 or less have low *explanatory styles* (more optimistic) tend to view events from a more external, unstable, and specific perspective (Ritchie, 1999). The mean AASQ scores were analyzed by employing stepwise regression, utilizing the demographic characteristics as the pool of predictor variables.

Cronbach's alpha has been calculated for each of the AASQ's three dimensions: Internality, 0.64, Stability, 0.85, and Globality, 0.84 (Ritchie, 1999). Cronbach's alpha has also been calculated for the entire AASQ, which is 0.84 (Peterson and Barrett, 1987).

The second survey, the Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching, (Appendix D) developed by Carol Weinstein (1988), is comprised of thirty-three questions that ask the respondent to rate their *beliefs and expectations* about teaching based on certain classroom scenarios presented to them. All questionnaire items followed the same format. Each item was presented twice. Version A began with the stem: "How much of a problem do you think the *average first-year teacher has...*". Version B began: "How much of a problem do you think *you* will have...". Respondents responded using a six point Likert-type scale, with 1 representing "no problem at all" and 6 representing "very serious problem". A paired-samples Mann-Whitney U test was conducted comparing the mean from part A of each question to the mean of part B of each question.

The third survey, the StrengthsFinder® instrument, developed by the Gallup Organization, guided the respondent through a timed series of 180 paired descriptors that ask him or her to choose the description that best fits his or her personal response to the situation presented (Walwey, 2000). At the end of the responses, five "strengths" were identified and described for the respondents. Research on this instrument is an ongoing and evolving model. StrengthsFinder® is being normed on a database of over 11,500 people. Many research studies have been completed on the StrengthsFinder® profile including studies relating StrengthsFinder® scores and performance criteria. The

reliabilities and validities are acceptable from a psychometric perspective (Walwey, 2000). Reliability scores have been reported of .78 with a 95% confidence interval of .824 to .735. Concurrent validity estimates for several studies are from .53 to .73 on samples of respondents in different positions within Gallup (Walwey, 2000). Each respondent received a copy of the book titled *Now Discover Your Strengths*, which is co-authored by the owner of Gallup, Donald Clifton (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001). This text included instructions and a password that allowed respondents to take the StrengthsFinder® survey.

A demographic questionnaire (Appendix C) was included at the beginning of the Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching, and the AASQ surveys. The demographic survey, the AASQ, and the Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching were posted on a web site. The StrengthsFinder® instrument was also web-based and instructions were given to each specific respondent in the text, *Now, Discover Your Strengths* (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001). Other than demographic information, anonymity was protected. There were no distinguishing features on the survey instruments that could lead to the identification of a participant.

A pilot study of the Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching and the Academic Attributional Style surveys was conducted. A group of College of Education students at Montana State University – Bozeman was administered the Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire, the Beliefs and Expectations About the First Year of Teaching, and the demographic survey. The StrengthsFinder® survey was not pilot tested due to the proprietary nature of the instrument and the extensive

developmental research data already available through the Gallup organization as described above. Pilot study respondents were asked not to answer the final question on the demographic survey, which was directly related to agricultural education. Refer to Appendix G for the survey instructions. The pilot study data from the Beliefs and Expectations About Teaching instrument was analyzed to determine a Cronbach's Alpha statistic. This statistic was found to be 0.9674. The pilot study data from the Academic Attributional Style questionnaire was also analyzed to determine a Cronbach's Alpha statistic. This statistic was found to be 0.834, which is consistent with Peterson and Barrett's findings of 0.84 (1987).

While the pilot study audience did not have all of the same characteristics of the agricultural education students, many similarities exist. This audience was asked to evaluate the surveys and identify problems with the web site and time taken to complete the surveys. However, the pilot study respondents did not indicate that one question set on the Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching survey was misstated. Respondents from the population noted this during the normal administration of the instrument. That question set was removed from the database and all analysis was conducted without it. The question set omitted asked, "How much of a problem do you think the *average first-year teacher* has organizing class assignments and activities?" and "How much of a problem do you think *you* will have organizing class assignments and activities?".

Data Collection

The data for this study was collected using web based survey instruments. The following timetable was followed:

- 1) October 2002 – initial contact was made by telephone.
- 2) November 4, 2002 – request for participation in the study occurred by e-mail. (Appendix A)
- 3) November 26, 2002 – e-mail reminder and announcement that the website was up and the text books had been sent. (Appendix B)
- 4) December 11, 2002 – survey instructions were mailed to all participants. (Appendix F)
- 5) January 15, 2003– final reminder and thank you were sent by e-mail. (Appendix H)

As stated earlier, a total of 61 participants were identified. A cover letter and instructions (Appendix F) were mailed to each of the programs participating. Because the surveys were all web-based, data from the demographic questionnaire, the Beliefs and Expectations about Student Teaching and the AASQ were collected from the web site using Microsoft Access®™. All respondent answers were automatically entered into tabular format from the web site. The instructors at each of the universities collected the results of the StrengthsFinder® survey from each of the respondents and returned them by mail. Fifty-three respondents completed all surveys. The University of Idaho had four respondents drop from the agricultural education program, Washington State University had three respondents drop from the program, and Montana State University had one respondent who did not respond to the survey request. Follow-up e-mails were sent to the University of Idaho and Washington State University. Personal contact was made with the professor at Montana State University. Several e-mails were sent until

confirmation was received that the respondents had dropped out of the agricultural education program. Montana State University confirmed that the non-respondent had started his or her student teaching experience, thus making him or her ineligible for the study. This resulted in a total of 53 respondents who completed all surveys that were administered.

Data Analysis

Data were initially entered into a Microsoft Access®™ database. Data analysis was completed using procedures available through SPSS 11.0 for Windows. Expert guidance from a professor of educational statistics at Montana State University was sought during statistical analysis of data. Descriptive statistics were generated for the instrument results based on demographic variables. Nonparametric statistics (Mann-Whitney U Test) were used to compare subgroups since representativeness was not obtained through the use of probability sampling approaches.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The study was designed to examine the *beliefs and expectations* about teaching, the *explanatory style* (optimism vs. pessimism), and the StrengthsFinder® profiles of student teachers in agricultural education programs in the western states of Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah and Washington. To satisfy the objectives of the study, the results from these surveys were divided into five areas: 1) Demographic Data, 2) Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching, 3) Academic Attributional Style, 4) StrengthsFinder® Strengths and 5) Compilation of Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching, Academic Attributional Style, and StrengthsFinder® Strengths.

Demographic Data

Information summarized in Table 1 shows the gender distribution of the population by state. Thirty-one (58.5%) respondents were female and 22 (41.5%) were male.

Table 1. Gender of Survey Participants by State, N=53.

Gender	State						Total no.(%)
	AZ* n=10	ID* n=13	MT* n=7	OR* n=10	UT* n=7	WA* n=6	
Female	8	5	4	7	3	4	31 (58.5%)
Male	2	8	3	3	4	2	22 (41.5%)

* AZ=Arizona, ID=Idaho, MT=Montana, OR=Oregon, UT=Utah,
WA=Washington

Data in Table 2 reports that 25 (47.2%) respondents came from rural farms. Thirteen (24.5%) came from rural non-farms and 15 (28.3%) came from urban areas.

Table 2. Location of Survey Participant's Home by State, N=53.

Home Location	State						Total no.(%)
	AZ n=10	ID n=13	MT n=7	OR n=10	UT n=7	WA n=6	
Rural Farm	1	10	2	4	4	4	25 (47.2%)
Rural Non-Farm	1	1	5	2	2	2	13 (24.5%)
Urban	8	2	0	4	1	0	15 (28.3%)

As seen by the data in Table 3, out of 53 respondents, 25 (47.2%) respondents were between the ages of 21 and 22 years old. Twenty four [17 +7] (45.3%) were between the ages of 23 and 30 years old and 4 (7.5%) respondents were 31 years of age or older.

Table 3. Age of Survey Participants by State, N=53.

Age	State						Total no.(%)
	AZ n=10	ID n=13	MT n=7	OR n=10	UT n=7	WA n=6	
21-22	4	8	3	4	1	5	25 (47.2%)
23-24	5	2	3	4	3	0	17 (32.1%)
25-30	0	3	1	2	1	0	7 (13.2%)
30+	1	0	0	0	2	1	4 (7.5%)

Data found in Table 4 shows that 21 (39.6%) respondents were employed part-time, 3 (5.7%) respondents were employed full time, while the remaining 29 (54.7%) respondents were unemployed.

Table 4. Employment Status of Survey Participants by State, N=53.

Employment Status	State						Total no.(%)
	AZ N=10	ID n=13	MT n=7	OR n=10	UT n=7	WA n=6	
Employed-Part Time	1	7	4	4	2	3	21 (39.6%)
Employed-Full Time	1	0	2	0	0	0	3 (5.7%)
Unemployed	8	6	1	6	5	3	29 (54.7%)

Data in Table 5 presents the range of collegiate Grade Point Average (GPA) of the respondents. Of 53 total respondents, 10 [3+7] (18.9%) respondents had a college GPA of 2.1-3.0. The majority of the respondents, 28 (52.8%) had a college GPA of 3.1-3.5. Fifteen (28.3%) respondents had a college GPA of 3.6-4.0.

Table 5. College Grade Point Average of Survey Participants by State, N=53.

College GPA	State						Total no.(%)
	AZ n=10	ID n=13	MT n=7	OR n=10	UT n=7	WA n=6	
2.1-2.5	1	1	1	0	0	0	3 (5.7%)
2.6-3.0	0	3	2	1	1	0	7 (13.2%)
3.1-3.5	4	6	3	6	4	5	28 (52.8%)
3.6-4.0	5	3	1	3	2	1	15 (28.3%)

As seen in Table 6, only 1 (1.9%) respondent was enrolled in 7-10 credits. Seventeen (32.1%) respondents were enrolled in 11-14 credit hours, and the majority, 25 (47.2%) respondents, was enrolled in 15-18 credit hours. Ten (18.9%) respondents were enrolled in 19 or more credit hours.

Table 6. Credit Hours Currently Enrolled of Survey Participants by State, N=53.

Credit Hours	State						Total no.(%)
	AZ n=10	ID n=13	MT n=7	OR n=10	UT n=7	WA n=6	
7-10	0	0	1	0	0	0	1 (1.9%)
11-14	6	0	1	1	7	2	17 (32.1%)
15-18	4	7	2	9	0	3	25 (47.2%)
>19	0	6	3	0	0	1	10 (18.9%)

Information in Table 7 shows that the majority of the respondents, 38 (71.7%) did receive an academic scholarship, and 15 (28.3%) respondents did not. The only state having less than 50% of its students receiving an academic scholarship was Montana.

Table 7. Respondent Academic Scholarships Received by State, N=53.

Scholarship Received	State						Total no.(%)
	AZ n=10	ID n=13	MT n=7	OR n=10	UT n=7	WA n=6	
Yes	8	10	3	5	7	5	38 (71.7%)
No	2	3	4	5	0	1	15 (28.4%)

As seen in Table 8, the majority of the respondents, 44 (83.0%) also took agriculture classes in high school. Nine (17.0%) respondents did not take agriculture classes in high school. In two states, Idaho and Utah, all respondents took high school agriculture courses.

Table 8. Agriculture Courses Taken in High School of Survey Participants by State, N=53.

Agriculture Courses Taken in High School	State						Total no.(%)
	AZ n=10	ID n=13	MT n=7	OR n=10	UT n=7	WA n=6	
Yes	6	13	6	7	7	5	44 (83.0%)
No	4	0	1	3	0	1	9 (17.0%)

Data in Table 9 indicates that 44 (83.0%) respondents were members of FFA in high school, and 9 (17.0%) were not. The frequencies found in Table 9 match those in Table 8 regarding enrollment in high school agriculture courses.

Table 9. FFA Membership of Survey Participants by State, N=53.

FFA Member	State						Total no.(%)
	AZ n=10	ID n=13	MT n=7	OR n=10	UT n=7	WA n=6	
Yes	6	13	6	7	7	5	44 (83.0%)
No	4	0	1	3	0	1	9 (17.0%)

Table 10 shows the majority, 36 (67.9%) respondents were involved in 4-H, and 17 (32.1%) were not. Except for Oregon and Utah, these frequencies compare to those in Table 9 for respondents' FFA membership.

Table 10. 4-H Membership of Survey Participants by State, N=53.

4-H Member	State						Total no.(%)
	AZ n=10	ID n=13	MT n=7	OR n=10	UT n=7	WA n=6	
Yes	6	12	6	4	4	4	36 (67.9%)
No	4	1	1	6	3	2	17 (32.1%)

Information found in Table 11 shows the strongest influence on respondents' college career. Over 90% of respondents indicated high school teachers (17, 32.1%), immediate family (17, 32.1%), and themselves (16, 30.2%) as the strongest influence on their college career.

Table 11. Strongest Influence on College Career of Survey Participants by State, N=53.

Strongest Influence	State						Total no.(%)
	AZ n=10	ID n=13	MT n=7	OR n=10	UT n=7	WA n=6	
Immediate Family	5	4	2	3	2	1	17 (32.1%)
High School Teacher(s)	1	2	5	4	2	3	17 (32.1%)
Family Expectations	0	0	0	1	0	0	1 (1.9%)
Religion	0	0	0	1	0	0	1 (1.9%)
Yourself	3	7	0	1	3	2	16 (30.2%)
Other	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 (1.9%)

Data presented in Table 12 shows that 1 (1.9%) respondent indicated no degree of certainty about why they are preparing to become an agricultural education teacher. Four (7.5%) respondents indicated a weak degree of certainty, 8 (15.1%) indicated a moderate degree. The majority, 24 (45.3%) respondents, indicated a strong degree of certainty and 16 (30.2%) indicated a very strong degree of certainty.

Table 12. Degree of Certainty about Becoming an Agricultural Education Teacher of Survey Participants, N=53.

Degree of Certainty	State						Total no.(%)
	AZ n=10	ID n=13	MT n=7	OR n=10	UT n=7	WA n=6	
None	0	0	0	0	1	0	1 (1.9%)
Weak	2	0	0	1	0	1	4 (7.5%)
Moderate	2	1	2	2	1	0	8 (15.1%)
Strong	4	8	3	3	4	2	24 (45.3%)
Very Strong	2	4	2	4	1	3	16 (30.2%)

Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching

Table 13 summarizes the results from the Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching survey. Thirty two questionnaire items are presented in order of perceived difficulty for “the *average first year teacher*.” These ratings, listed in Column

2, were used as a measure of the respondents' beliefs about the difficulty of teaching for his or her peers. Column 3 in Table 13 presents the mean ratings to the questions asking "How much of a problem do you think *you* will have...." The difference between these self-ratings and the peer ratings constitutes a measure of optimism for a respondent. If respondents' responses were unbiased, then the mean difference would be zero for each task of teaching. A group mean less than zero indicates an optimistic bias; the more negative the mean, the greater the bias towards the respondent's feeling that he or she will handle the given situation better than his or hers peers.

After each questionnaire item, two categorizations are listed. First, each item is assigned either a high control (HC) or low control (LC) designation (Weinstein, 1988). High control items are those items for which the respondent would have a high degree of control, for example, "dealing with the work load". Low control items are those items for which the respondent would have little or no control over, for example, "dealing with constraints imposed by the school board". Second, each item is assigned an instruction (I), management (M), or interpersonal relationships (IR) designation (Weinstein, 1988). Those items with an "I" designation deal with experiences related to instruction. Those items with a "M" designation deal with experiences relation to management, and items

Table 13. Beliefs and Expectations Mean Scores and Mean Score Differences

Questionnaire Item ^a	Peer-rating	Self-rating	Optimism (self rating-peer rating)	Sig. (2-tailed) ^b
Dealing with the work load (HC,M)	4.55	3.98	-0.57	.016*
Dealing with insufficient materials and supplies (LC,I)	4.40	3.74	-0.66	.001*
Improving the academic performance of low-achieving students (HC,I)	4.13	3.42	-0.72	.000*
Effectively responding to students' misbehavior (HC,M)	4.13	3.11	-1.02	.000*
Dealing with inadequate school equipment (LC,I)	3.96	3.70	-0.26	.009*
Adapting curricula and instruction to the needs of slow learners (HC,I)	3.87	3.40	-0.47	.026*
Dealing with a lack of supplementary materials that enrich the curriculum (LC,I)	3.85	3.34	-0.51	.009*
Panning lessons and units (HC,I)	3.85	3.30	-0.55	.010*
Maintaining classroom discipline (HC,M)	3.74	2.70	-1.04	.000*
Dealing with the clerical work required (HC,M)	3.62	3.30	-0.32	.183
Knowing the subject matter (HC,I)	3.57	3.23	-0.34	.046*
Figuring out why students are having difficulties with assignments (HC,I)	3.55	2.87	-0.68	.001*
Re-teaching students who don't comprehend the material the first time around (HC,I)	3.45	2.83	-0.62	.001*
Relating to parents (HC,IR)	3.43	1.64	-0.79	.000*
Establishing and enforcing class rules and procedures (HC,M)	3.42	2.68	-0.74	.000*
Motivating students (HC,I)	3.42	2.83	-0.58	.000*
Getting students to work quietly during seat-work time (HC,M)	3.40	2.74	-0.66	.003*
Determining the achievement level of students (HC,I)	3.40	3.00	-0.4	.000*
Relating to administrators (HC,IR)	3.36	2.70	-0.66	.000*
Effectively using different teaching methods (HC,I)	3.36	2.75	-0.6	.001*
Assigning work of appropriate difficulty (HC,I)	3.32	2.96	-0.36	.057
Being accepted by students (HC,IR)	3.32	2.47	-0.85	.000*
Dealing with individual differences (HC, IR)	3.13	2.38	-0.75	.000*
Dealing with constraints imposed by the school board (LC,IR)	3.11	2.87	-0.25	.031*
Dealing with school activities that take time away from the instructional program (LC,M)	3.09	2.75	-0.34	.046*
Teaching students from different cultures and backgrounds (HC,I)	3.00	2.43	-0.57	.000*
Evaluating students' work (HC,I)	2.98	2.87	-0.11	.508
Dealing with constraints imposed by the principal (LC,M)	2.75	2.51	-0.25	.031*
Children leaving to go to "specials" (LC,I)	2.66	2.40	-0.26	.186
Being aware of and following school policies and rules (HC,M)	2.58	1.34	-0.25	.194
Getting along with colleagues (HC, IR)	2.45	1.96	-0.49	.000*
Forming correct cursive or manuscript letters (HC,I)	2.40	2.53	0.13	.284

^a Notations in parenthesis after the questionnaire items refer to the categorization of the items: (HC) High Control, (LC) Low Control, (I) Instruction, (M) Management, (IR) Interpersonal Relations

^b Items with * are significant at the $p < .05$ level.

designated with an “IR” deal with interpersonal relationships. Twenty-five of the items fell into the high control (HC) category. The remaining 7 items were viewed as low control (LC) items. Seventeen items fell into the instruction (I) category, 9 into the management (M) category and 6 into the interpersonal relations (IR) category.

A paired-samples Mann-Whitney U test was conducted comparing the mean from part A of each question to the mean of part B of each question. Twenty-six of the items were statistically significant at the .05 level. Items not statistically significant were: “dealing with the clerical work required”, “assigning work of appropriate difficulty”, “evaluating students’ work”, “children leaving to go to the ‘specials’ ”, “being aware of and following school policies and rules” and “forming correct cursive or manuscript letters”. Variance was a major reason why these six item means were relatively close to other item means, but yet were not found to be statistically significant.

Subjects were most optimistic about their ability to “maintain classroom discipline” (-1.04), to “effectively respond to students’ misbehavior” (-1.02), “to be accepted by students” (-0.85), and “to relate to parents” (-0.79). All of these items fell in the high control category. Subjects are least optimistic about their ability to “be aware of and follow school policies and rules” (-0.25), to “deal with constraints imposed by the principal” (-0.25), to “deal with constraints imposed by the school board” (-0.25), to “deal with children leaving to go to ‘specials’ ” (-0.26) and to “deal with inadequate school equipment” (-0.26). All of these items fell into the low control category. Subjects are pessimistic about their “ability to form correct cursive or manuscript letters” (0.13), but this item was not statistically significant.

Academic Attributional Style

Table 14 summarizes the B (internality), C (stability), D (globality) and Composite optimism scores for each respondent. As stated earlier, individuals who possess a higher *explanatory style* score (more pessimistic) tend to look at causes from more internal, global and stable perspectives. For instance, if a respondent was to have a composite score of greater than 5.0, typical responses from this respondent would reflect a higher degree of internality, stability, and globality. Respondents with low *explanatory styles* (less than 3.5) tend to view events from a more external, unstable, and specific, and therefore, more optimistic perspective (Ritchie, 1999).

Nineteen respondents scored higher than a 5.0 on the B score section of the instrument. Only two respondents scored lower than a 3.5 on this section.

Five respondents scored higher than a 5.0 on the C score section of the instrument. Eleven respondents scored lower than a 3.5 on this section.

Seven respondents scored higher than a 5.0 on the D score section of the instrument. Seventeen respondents scored lower than a 3.5.

Three respondents received a Composite score higher than 5.0. Six respondents received a Composite score lower than 3.5. The remaining 44 respondents scored between 3.5 and 5.0 and are neither overly optimistic nor pessimistic.

Table 14. Summary of AASQ Scores by Respondent N=53.

Respondent	B	C	D	Composite*
N= 53	Score*	Score*	Score*	
1	4.00	3.67	2.25	3.31
2	4.58	4.67	4.67	4.64
3	3.25	3.67	2.75	3.22
4	4.00	3.75	3.33	3.69
5	4.33	4.33	4.00	4.22
6	3.25	3.58	3.83	3.55
7	4.75	4.67	4.30	4.57
8	4.50	3.83	3.58	3.91
9	4.17	4.58	4.50	4.42
10	4.33	3.75	5.33	4.47
11	4.08	4.25	5.08	4.47
12	4.25	4.08	4.67	4.33
13	5.17	4.00	3.42	4.20
14	4.58	2.67	3.17	3.47
15	5.08	5.67	5.92	5.56
16	5.08	3.67	4.17	4.31
17	4.33	3.50	3.92	3.92
18	5.17	1.92	2.00	3.03
19	5.67	3.42	4.08	4.39
20	5.50	3.83	4.00	4.44
21	4.33	4.25	4.00	4.19
22	5.08	1.92	2.25	3.08
23	4.25	3.71	3.58	3.85
24	4.67	5.08	3.67	4.47
25	4.08	3.58	3.08	3.58
26	4.50	3.75	4.58	4.28
27	5.50	2.42	4.00	3.97
28	4.75	2.83	3.75	3.78
29	5.08	4.08	4.33	4.50
30	4.25	3.83	3.25	3.78
31	4.83	2.92	1.58	3.11
32	5.58	3.50	3.42	4.17
33	6.00	4.83	4.00	4.94
34	5.83	3.00	3.08	3.97
35	5.33	3.33	4.17	4.28
36	4.67	4.25	4.17	4.36
37	4.75	3.67	3.75	4.06
38	6.25	6.17	6.75	6.39
39	5.83	4.25	5.00	5.03

* B Score = Internality; C Score = Stability; D Score = Globality;
Composite = Mean of B, C and D Scores

Table 14. Summary of AASQ Scores by Respondent N=53 (continued).

Respondent N= 53	B Score*	C Score*	D Score*	Composite*
40	5.83	3.75	3.50	4.36
41	3.92	3.58	4.00	3.83
42	2.67	5.08	5.17	4.31
43	4.58	4.67	2.25	3.83
44	4.00	5.00	5.33	4.78
45	4.58	4.58	4.67	4.61
46	4.33	3.83	3.92	4.03
47	4.08	5.25	4.67	4.67
48	5.25	4.58	4.50	4.78
49	4.67	4.25	4.58	4.50
50	6.42	3.25	2.83	4.17
51	5.58	3.75	2.33	3.89
52	4.72	3.50	3.08	3.77
53	4.42	3.17	3.08	3.56

* B Score = Internality; C Score = Stability; D Score = Globality;
Composite = Mean of B, C and D Scores

Table 15 summarizes the AASQ B, C, D, and Composite scores by state. Scores from each respondent within each state were averaged. On the B score section of the instrument, two states scored higher than a 5.0 (Oregon, 5.49 and Washington, 5.18). Washington scored lower than a 3.5 on the D score section, receiving a 3.40. All Composite scores for each state fell in the in-between range of 3.5-5.0.

Table 15. Summary of AASQ Mean Scores by State.

State	Mean			
	B Score*	C Score*	D Score*	Composite*
Arizona	4.12	4.05	3.85	4.00
Idaho	4.81	3.61	3.87	4.10
Montana	4.69	3.65	3.81	4.05
Oregon	5.49	3.97	3.94	4.47
Utah	4.02	4.57	4.29	4.29
Washington	5.18	3.75	3.40	4.11

* B Score = Internality; C Score = Stability; D Score = Globality; Composite = Mean of B, C and D Scores

Further analysis of the AASQ using the demographic variables was conducted. The mean AASQ scores were analyzed by employing stepwise regression, utilizing the demographic characteristics as the pool of predictor variables. The results of the stepwise regression analysis for the respondents are presented in Table 16. Only one independent variable, “Scholarship”, had a significant influence on AASQ scores. The D score (globality) and the Composite score are both statistically significant at the .05 level. The independent variable, “Scholarship” had a significant effect on respondents’ scores on the D section (globality) of the AASQ and the Composite score.

Table 16. Significance of Scholarship on the AASQ Results.

AASQ Category	Mean Score		U-Value	U-Prob. *
	Scholarship N=38	No Scholarship N=15		
B	4.67	4.89	242.50	0.401
C	3.76	4.26	221.00	0.206
D	3.66	4.41	179.00	0.036*
Composite	4.03	4.52	169.50	0.023*

*U-Prob<.05

Likert-type response ranging from 1-7. 1=Always present, 7=Never present

StrengthsFinder®

Table 17 gives the frequency of strengths from the StrengthsFinder® survey from the student teacher respondents. See appendix J for descriptions of each of the strengths. Seven of the respondents had “Adaptability” as their first strength. Six respondents had “Input” as their first strength, and 5 respondents had “Achiever” and “Learner”. Four respondents had “Developer” identified and 3 had “Responsibility”. Two respondents had “Connectedness”, “Harmony”, “Includer”, “Maximizer”, “Strategic” and “Woo”

each identified as their first strength. Strengths “Activator”, “Analytical”, “Command”, “Context”, “Empathy”, “Focus”, “Individualization”, “Intellection”, “Relator”, “Restorative”, and “Significance” were identified as the first strength in one respondent each. Strengths “Arranger”, “Belief”, “Communication”, “Competition”, “Consistency”, “Deliberative”, “Discipline”, “Futuristic”, “Ideation”, “Positivity”, and “Self-assurance” were not identified as a first strength for any of the respondents.

Table 17. Frequency of Strengths from StrengthsFinder® Survey Respondents sorted by 1st strength. N=53.

Strength	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total
Adaptability	7	2	1	0	1	11
Input	6	2	2	2	4	16
Achiever	5	4	1	0	1	11
Learner	5	3	2	6	1	17
Developer	4	0	1	0	1	6
Responsibility	3	5	1	3	1	13
Connectedness	2	0	0	1	3	6
Harmony	2	4	3	4	2	15
Includer	2	3	1	1	2	9
Maximizer	2	0	2	0	1	5
Strategic	2	0	2	0	1	5
Woo	2	1	1	1	2	7
Activator	1	2	1	2	1	7
Analytical	1	1	3	1	2	8
Command	1	1	1	0	1	4
Context	1	4	0	3	0	8
Empathy	1	0	2	1	0	4
Focus	1	0	1	2	2	6
Individualization	1	3	2	1	0	7
Intellection	1	0	2	1	2	6
Relator	1	2	2	1	4	10
Restorative	1	1	1	1	1	5
Significance	1	0	0	1	0	2
Arranger	0	2	3	1	3	9
Belief	0	1	3	6	7	17
Communication	0	0	3	2	1	6
Competition	0	1	1	1	2	5

Table 17. Frequency of Strengths from StrengthsFinder® Survey Respondents sorted by 1st strength. N=53 (continued).

Consistency	0	2	2	1	1	6
Deliberative	0	3	1	0	2	6
Discipline	0	0	1	1	1	3
Futuristic	0	0	1	1	0	2
Ideation	0	1	0	2	0	3
Positivity	0	3	2	3	3	11
Self-Assurance	0	2	3	1	0	6

Compilation of Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching, Academic Attributional Style, and StrengthsFinder® Strengths.

Table 18 summarizes the Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching results and the AASQ results by the StrengthsFinder® themes. Column one lists the number of respondents found to have each strength noted in column two. In some cases, there is only one respondent per theme strength. Eight theme strengths scored higher than a 5.0 on the B score section of the AASQ. The theme strength “Context” scored a 2.67 on this section of the instrument, which is below the 3.5 level that is the threshold for the more external respondents.

The theme strength “Context” also stood out because it was the only strength to score above a 5.0 on the C (5.08) and D (5.17) score section of the AASQ. Seven theme strengths including “Command” (3.33), “Empathy” (3.25), “Includer” (3.46), “Intellection” (2.67), “Relator” (1.92), “Responsibility” (3.36), and “Restorative” (3.00) scored lower than a 3.5 on the C score section of the instrument.

The theme strength “Context” was also the only theme strength to score above a 5.0 on the D score section of the AASQ as well. Theme strengths “Empathy” (2.83),

“Focus” (3.42), “Intellection” (3.17), “Relator” (2.00), “Responsibility” (3.49), “Restorative” (3.08) and “Woo” (2.67) all scored below 3.5 on the D score section.

Three theme strengths, “Intellection” (3.47), “Relator” (3.03), and “Woo” (3.45) all scored lower than a 3.5 on the Composite section of the AASQ. All theme strengths report a negative optimism score on the Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching instrument, except for “Restorative” which scored a 0.00.

Table 18. Compilation of Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching, Academic Attributional Style, and StrengthsFinder® Strengths.

n	First Strength	B Score*	C Score*	D Score*	Composite*	Optimism**
5	Achiever	4.38	3.95	3.95	4.08	-0.88
1	Activator	5.50	3.83	4.00	4.44	-0.75
7	Adaptability	4.81	4.23	4.59	4.54	-0.31
1	Analytical	5.83	3.75	3.50	4.36	-0.34
1	Command	5.33	3.33	4.17	4.28	-1.47
2	Connectedness	4.92	3.61	3.50	4.01	-0.14
1	Context	2.67	5.08	5.17	4.31	-1.00
4	Developer	4.63	3.50	3.88	4.00	-0.33
1	Empathy	6.42	3.25	2.83	4.17	-1.09
1	Focus	5.17	4.00	3.42	4.20	-0.25
2	Harmony	4.36	4.25	4.21	4.28	-0.25
2	Includer	4.50	3.46	4.21	4.06	-0.29
1	Individualization	4.17	4.58	4.50	4.42	-0.19
6	Input	4.60	4.35	3.97	4.31	-0.62
1	Intellection	4.58	2.67	3.17	3.47	-0.16
5	Learner	4.62	3.93	3.68	4.08	-0.37
2	Maximizer	4.42	4.21	3.96	4.20	-0.47
1	Relator	5.17	1.92	2.00	3.03	-0.84
3	Responsibility	4.72	3.36	3.49	3.86	-0.63
1	Restorative	5.83	3.00	3.08	3.97	0.00
1	Significance	6.00	4.83	4.00	4.94	-0.09
2	Strategic	5.33	4.71	4.13	4.73	-1.21
2	Woo	4.04	3.63	2.67	3.45	-0.36

* B Score = Internality; C Score = Stability; D Score = Globality; Composite = Mean of B, D and D Scores

** All optimism scores for each question were averaged. These mean scores were then averaged again within each StrengthsFinder® theme group.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine levels of optimism and pessimism along with the *beliefs and expectations* of teaching in agricultural education pre-service student teachers, and to compare these findings to that of the Gallup Organization's StrengthsFinder® profile. The states included in this study were Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

The objectives of this study were to determine the following about pre-service student teachers in agricultural education programs in the western states of Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah and Washington:

- (1) Their *beliefs and expectations* about teaching
- (2) Their *explanatory style* (optimism vs. pessimism)
- (3) Their StrengthsFinder® profiles and to
- (4) Compare the *beliefs and expectations* about teaching and the *explanatory style* (optimism vs. pessimism) to their StrengthsFinder® Profiles.

This section is divided into four areas: 1) Conclusions, 2) Implications, 3) Recommendations, and 4) Recommendations for Further Study.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of data, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1) The majority of the respondents (71.7%) received an academic scholarship. This was the only demographic variable to have any predictive value regarding *explanatory style*.
- 2) Overall, respondents believed that they will perform better at their teaching tasks as outlined in the Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching questionnaire than their peers. All respondents scored a negative optimism score on this instrument, which tells the researcher that they are confident in their teaching abilities compared to their peers. The top four items that the respondents feel they will perform better as reported by the respondents were: “maintain classroom discipline”, “respond to student’s misbehavior”, “be accepted by students”, and “relate to parents”.
- 3) The majority of the respondents (46) fell in the middle range as reported by the results of the Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire (AASQ) as indicated by the composite score, thus indicating that they are neither overly optimistic, nor overly pessimistic. These middle range respondents are able to respond to negative situations with a balance of optimism and pessimism. Only three respondents were excessively pessimistic and only five respondents were overly optimistic.
- 4) Overall, when the respondents were examined by looking at all three questionnaires collectively, no overly pessimistic groups were identified as measured by the AASQ. The StrengthsFinder® groups for first strength of “Intellection”, “Relator” and “Woo” were identified as being very optimistic, as measured by the AASQ. All groups felt that they would perform better than their peers at the teaching tasks presented by the Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching instrument except the StrengthsFinder® group “Restorative”. This group scored a 0.00, meaning they think they will perform the same as their peers.

Implications

The data provided by this research allowed the researcher to believe and make the following statements:

- 1) There is a need for further education of pre-service agricultural education teachers about the reality of the teaching experience by providing training in ways to become more realistic about teaching. A responsibility exists for teacher educators in instructing student teaching supervisors and administrators to ensure that student teachers receive a realistic experience.
- 2) Based on Seligman's work, and the findings of this study, there is a need for teacher educators to be aware of the effects *explanatory style* has on success rates of individual teachers.
- 3) Data obtained in this study may be pertinent to other areas of vocational education where similar teaching methods are employed.

Recommendations

The entire research process, including the review of literature, collection and analysis of data, and consideration of comments made by survey respondents, committee members, and others led the researcher to make the following recommendations:

- 1) Use of the Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching questionnaire, the Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire, and the StrengthsFinder® profile should be implemented into the recruitment and retention procedures of agricultural education programs in order to provide the pre-service agricultural education teachers with another tool for use in their growth, development, and self-definitions.
- 2) Pre-service agricultural education students need to be made better aware of the realities of the teaching profession through the use of more cohort instruction, field based experiences and seasoned teachers. Field based experience classes and para-professional experiences need to be emphasized in the curriculum in order to present realistic experiences of teaching to prospective student teachers.
- 3) Instruction in the importance of *explanatory style* on life events, reactions, and success rates needs to be implemented into the agricultural education curriculum.
- 4) Pre-service agricultural education teachers who are identified as having overly optimistic *beliefs and expectations* about teaching and either overly optimistic or pessimistic *explanatory styles* need to be offered instruction in how to manage these tendencies in order to increase success and retention in the teaching field.

- 5) Special care needs to be taken in identifying factors, such as *beliefs and expectations*, *explanatory style*, and StrengthsFinder® themes, that may have an effect on professional retention.
- 6) Based on the work of the Gallup organization, encouraging development of strengths rather than weaknesses should be undertaken by teacher educators to ensure more positive experiences and higher success rates of pre-service agricultural education teachers. Therefore, pre-service agricultural education teachers need to be made aware of their strengths as identified by the StrengthsFinder® profile, and encouraged to develop these areas.

Recommendations for Further Study

Research is needed to support the continual development of the use of these questionnaires as recruitment and retention tools, and to refine the data developed in this study. The researcher offers the following recommendations for further study:

- 1) Repeat the study with a larger population representing more pre-service student teachers to determine if correlations exist between *beliefs and expectations* about teaching, *explanatory style* and strengths identified by the StrengthsFinder® profile.
- 2) Similar research should be conducted in other areas of vocational education to determine if these questionnaires are useful in other educational fields.
- 3) Similar research should be conducted with supervisors of student teachers in order to determine their optimism scores in order for better student teacher placement.
- 4) A new attributional style questionnaire should be created that deals with negative teaching situations. Research could then be conducted with active teachers in order to assist them in dealing with the stressors of the occupation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Introduction and Request for Participation e-mail

From: Katie Cooper

Sent: Monday, November 04, 2002 1:13pm

To: elliott@ag.arizona.edu; uadcs@montana.edu; uadmf@montana.edu; mswan50@hotmail.com; maswan@wsu.edu; dhubert@cc.usu.edu; aepals@uidaho.edu; greg.thompson@orst.edu

Subject: Introduction

Hello! My name is Katie Cooper and I am a graduate student working with Dr. Martin Frick at Montana State University. It is my understanding that Dr. Frick has previously contacted you in regards to my research project. To refresh your memory, I am researching the relationships between students' levels of optimism, as measured by the Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire, their beliefs and expectations about teaching, as measured by the Beliefs and Expectations About the First Year of Teaching questionnaire, and their profile as outlined by the Gallup organization's StrengthsFinder® profile instrument.

The purpose of this letter is to again ask you for your help and to obtain some information. The first thing I need to do is to confirm the number of students that are currently in your teaching methods classes this semester. I would also like to know when these students will be student teaching.

We are currently in the process of getting the instruments put on-line, and I am expecting that everything will be fully functional by the 11th of November.

Thank you for your cooperation in this project and I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

Katie Cooper
AgEd Graduate Student
Montana State University

APPENDIX B

Update of Web Site Accessibility and Packets Mailed e-mail

From: Katie Cooper
Sent: Tuesday, November 26, 2002 2:35 pm
To: elliott@ag.arizona.edu; uadcs@montana.edu; uadmf@montana.edu;
mmswan50@hotmail.com; maswan@wsu.edu; dhubert@cc.usu.edu; aecpals@uidaho.edu;
greg.thompson@orst.edu
Subject: Update

Hello everyone!

I just wanted to let you know that the StrengthsFinder® books have been mailed to each of your respective schools. They were ordered on November 24th, and should take approximately 10 days to ship. Specific directions and study booklets will be delivered by Martin Frick to each of you personally at the NAERC conference on December 11th. If you would like your packets mailed to you before this conference, I would be glad to do so.

I realize that we are quickly reaching the end of the semester, and that finals are looming. If at all possible, I would like all of your students to complete the surveys before they go out to their student teaching assignments. To help me ensure that you receive all necessary information in time for you to ask your students to complete these surveys, could you please let me know the time line for the rest of the semester at each of your respective schools? I want to make this as easy as possible.

Thank you again for your participation and cooperation. Have a great holiday and I look forward to speaking with each of you soon.

Katie Cooper
AgEd Graduate Student
Montana State University

APPENDIX C

Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Data

Please select the correct answer for each question.

1. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
2. Where is your home located?
 - a. Rural Farm
 - b. Rural non-farm
 - c. Urban
3. What is your age?
 - a. Under 20
 - b. 21-22
 - c. 23-24
 - d. 25-30
 - e. 30+
4. What is your current employment status?
 - a. Employed
 - b. Unemployed
5. What is your college GPA?
 - a. 1.0-2.0
 - b. 2.1-2.5
 - c. 2.6-3.0
 - d. 3.1-3.5
 - e. 3.6-4.0
6. How many credits are you enrolled in this semester?
 - a. Less than 6
 - b. 7-10
 - c. 11-14
 - d. 15-18
 - e. 19+
7. Have you received an academic scholarship?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. Were Agricultural Courses offered at your highschool?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
9. Were you a member of the FFA?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
10. Were you a member of 4-H?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
11. What individual or group most strongly influenced you to become a college student in your major?
 - a. Immediate family
 - b. Extended family
 - c. High school teacher(s)
 - d. High school guidance counselor
 - e. Community expectations
 - f. Family expectations
 - g. Religion
 - h. Yourself
 - i. Other

12. How strong is your degree of certainty about why you are preparing to become an agricultural education teacher?

- a. None b. Weak c. Moderate d. Strong e. Very strong

APPENDIX D

Beliefs and Expectations about the First Year of Teaching Questionnaire

Beliefs and Expectations About the First Year of Teaching

We are interested in learning what student teachers think are the major problems faced by beginning teachers. The results of this inventory will help ensure that our teacher education program meets these anticipated problems and concerns.

Each of the following items is divided into two parts. The first part asks you to indicate to what extent the item is experienced as a problem by the average first-year teacher. We recognize, however, that there is great deal of individual variation among beginning teachers. Since you have a unique pattern of strengths and weaknesses, the ratings you give for the average first-year teacher may not reflect the expectations you hold for yourself. Thus, the second part of each question asks you to rate how much of a problem you think it will be for you during your first year of teaching.

1. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has figuring out why students are having difficulties with assignments?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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2. How much of a problem do you think you will have figuring out why students are having difficulties with assignments?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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3. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has improving the academic performance of low-achieving students?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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4. How much of a problem do you think you will have improving the academic performance of low-achieving students?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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5. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has forming correct cursive or manuscript letters?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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6. How much of a problem do you think you will have forming correct cursive or manuscript letters?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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7. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has getting students to work quietly during seat-work time?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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8. How much of a problem do you think you will have getting students to work quietly during seat-work time?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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9. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has assigning work of appropriate difficulty?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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10. How much of a problem do you think you will have assigning work of appropriate difficulty?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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11. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has with insufficient materials and supplies?

no problem at all	problem	problem	problem	problem	problem
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12. How much of a problem do you think you will have with insufficient materials and supplies?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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13. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has adapting curricula and instruction to the needs of slow learners?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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14. How much of a problem do you think you will have adapting curricula and instruction to the needs of slow learners?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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15. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has because of children leaving to go to "specials"?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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16. How much of a problem do you think you will have because of children leaving to go to "specials"?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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17. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has with the work load?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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18. How much of a problem do you think you will have with the work load?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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19. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has because of a lack of supplementary materials that enrich the curriculum?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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20. How much of a problem do you think you will have because of a lack of supplementary materials that enrich the curriculum?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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21. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has effectively responding to students' misbehavior?

no problem at all	problem	problem	problem	problem	problem
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22. How much of a problem do you think you will have effectively responding to students' misbehavior?

no problem at all	problem	problem	problem	problem	problem
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23. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has with the clerical work required?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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24. How much of a problem do you think you will have with the clerical work required?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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25. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has planning lessons and units?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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26. How much of a problem do you think you will have planning lessons and units?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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27. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has dealing with individual differences?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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28. How much of a problem do you think you will have dealing with individual differences?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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29. How much of a problem do you think the average first year teacher has being aware of and following school policies and rules?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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30. How much of a problem do you think you will have being aware of and following school policies and rules?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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31. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has establishing and enforcing class rules and procedures?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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32. How much of a problem do you think you will have establishing and enforcing class rules and procedures?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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33. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has teaching students from different cultures and backgrounds?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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34. How much of a problem do you think you will have teaching students from different cultures and backgrounds?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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35. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has because of constraints imposed by the principal?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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36. How much of a problem do you think you will have because of constraints imposed by the principal?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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37. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has being accepted by students?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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38. How much of a problem do you think you will have being accepted by students?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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39. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has with students who don't comprehend the material the first time around and need re-teaching?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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40. How much of a problem do you think you will have with students who don't comprehend the material the first time around and need re-teaching?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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41. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has relating to administrators?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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42. How much of a problem do you think you will have relating to administrators?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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43. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has with inadequate school equipment?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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44. How much of a problem do you think you will have with inadequate school equipment?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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45. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has organizing class assignments and activities?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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46. How much of a problem do you think you will have organizing class assignments and activities?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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47. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has maintaining classroom discipline?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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48. How much of a problem do you think you will have maintaining classroom discipline?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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49. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has because of school activities that take time away from the instructional program?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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50. How much of a problem do you think you will have because of school activities that take time away from the instructional program?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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51. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has knowing the subject matter?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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52. How much of a problem do you think you will have knowing the subject matter?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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53. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has relating to parents?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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54. How much of a problem do you think you will have relating to parents?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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55. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has determining the achievement level of students?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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56. How much of a problem do you think you will have determining the achievement level of students?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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57. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has because of constraints imposed by the school board?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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58. How much of a problem do you think you will have because of constraints imposed by the school board?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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59. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has getting along with colleagues?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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60. How much of a problem do you think you will have getting along with colleagues?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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61. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has effectively using different teaching methods?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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62. How much of a problem do you think you will have effectively using different teaching methods?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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63. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has motivating students?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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64. How much of a problem do you think you will have motivating students?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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65. How much of a problem do you think the average first-year teacher has evaluating students work?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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66. How much of a problem do you think you will have evaluating students work?

no problem at all	very small problem	small problem	moderate problem	serious problem	very serious problem
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APPENDIX E

Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire

Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire
Interpretation of Academic Events

Please try to imagine yourself in the situations that follow. If such a situation were to happen to you, what would you feel would have caused it? While events have many causes, we want you to pick only one—the major cause if this event happened to you.

Please write this cause in the blank provided after each event. Then we want you to answer three questions about the cause you provided. First, is the cause of this event something about you or something about other people or circumstances? Second, is the cause something that will persist across time or something that will never again be present? Third, is the cause of this event something that affects all situations in your life or something that only affects just this type of event?

To summarize, we want you to:

1. Read each situation and vividly imagine it happening to you.
2. Decide what you feel would be the one major cause of the situation if it happened to you.
3. Write the cause in the blank provided.
4. Answer three questions about the cause.

1. You cannot get all the reading done that your instructor assigns.

A. Write down the one major cause:

B. Is the cause of this due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (choose one number)

totally due to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	totally due to me
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C. In the future, will this cause again be present? (choose one number)

never present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	always present
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D. Is this cause something that affects just this type of situation, or does it also influence other areas of your life? (choose one number)

just this situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	all situations
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2. You fail a final examination.

A. Write down the one major cause:

B. Is the cause of this due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (choose one number)

totally due to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	totally due to me
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

C. In the future, will this cause again be present? (choose one number)

never present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	always present
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D. Is this cause something that affects just this type of situation, or does it also influence other areas of your life? (choose one number)

just this situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	all situations
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3. You show up for a class and find to your surprise that there is a quiz.

A. Write down the one major cause:

B. Is the cause of this due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (choose one number)

totally due to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	totally due to me
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C. In the future, will this cause again be present? (choose one number)

never present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	always present
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D. Is this cause something that affects just this type of situation, or does it also influence other areas of your life? (choose one number)

just this situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	all situations
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4. You are on academic probation.

A. Write down the one major cause:

B. Is the cause of this due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (choose one number)

totally due to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	totally due to me
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

C. In the future, will this cause again be present? (choose one number)

never present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	always present
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D. Is this cause something that affects just this type of situation, or does it also influence other areas of your life? (choose one number)

just this situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	all situations
------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------

5. You do not have high enough grades to switch to your desired major.

A. Write down the one major cause:

B. Is the cause of this due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (choose one number)

totally due to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	totally due to me
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

C. In the future, will this cause again be present? (choose one number)

never present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	always present
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D. Is this cause something that affects just this type of situation, or does it also influence other areas of your life? (choose one number)

just this situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	all situations
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6. You cannot solve a single problem in a set of twenty assigned as homework.

A. Write down the one major cause:

B. Is the cause of this due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (choose one number)

totally due to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	totally due to me
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

C. In the future, will this cause again be present? (choose one number)

never present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	always present
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------

D. Is this cause something that affects just this type of situation, or does it also influence other areas of your life? (choose one number)

just this situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	all situations
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7. You are dropped from the university because your grades are too low.

A. Write down the one major cause:

B. Is the cause of this due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (choose one number)

totally due to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	totally due to me
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

C. In the future, will this cause again be present? (choose one number)

never present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	always present
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------

D. Is this cause something that affects just this type of situation, or does it also influence other areas of your life? (choose one number)

just this situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	all situations
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8. You cannot get started writing a paper.

A. Write down the one major cause:

B. Is the cause of this due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (choose one number)

totally due to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	totally due to me
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

C. In the future, will this cause again be present? (choose one number)

never present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	always present
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------

D. Is this cause something that affects just this type of situation, or does it also influence other areas of your life? (choose one number)

just this situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	all situations
------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------

9. You cannot find a book in the library.

A. Write down the one major cause:

B. Is the cause of this due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (choose one number)

totally due to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	totally due to me
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

C. In the future, will this cause again be present? (choose one number)

never present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	always present
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------

D. Is this cause something that affects just this type of situation, or does it also influence other areas of your life? (choose one number)

just this situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	all situations
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10. The required textbook for a course is unavailable in the school bookstore.

A. Write down the one major cause:

B. Is the cause of this due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (choose one number)

totally due to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	totally due to me
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C. In the future, will this cause again be present? (choose one number)

never present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	always present
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D. Is this cause something that affects just this type of situation, or does it also influence other areas of your life? (choose one number)

just this situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	all situations
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11. You get a D in a course required for your major.

A. Write down the one major cause:

B. Is the cause of this due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (choose one number)

totally due to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	totally due to me
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

C. In the future, will this cause again be present? (choose one number)

never present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	always present
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D. Is this cause something that affects just this type of situation, or does it also influence other areas of your life? (choose one number)

just this situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	all situations
------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------

12. You cannot understand the points a lecturer makes.

A. Write down the one major cause:

B. Is the cause of this due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances? (choose one number)

totally due to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	totally due to me
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------

C. In the future, will this cause again be present? (choose one number)

never present	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	always present
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------

D. Is this cause something that affects just this type of situation, or does it also influence other areas of your life? (choose one number)

just this situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	all situations
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APPENDIX F
Survey Instructions

SURVEY PARTICIPATION REQUEST

Hello! My name is Katie Cooper and I am working on my Master's Degree in Agricultural Education. As part of my study, I am asking you to voluntarily take a web-based survey to help me collect data. This survey is comprised of three parts: (1) Demographics (2) Your beliefs and expectations about the first year of teaching and (3) the Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire. I would like to thank you beforehand for taking the time to assist me in this research. The results obtained from this research should help me and other professionals in the field of education make better decisions regarding teacher recruitment and retention, academic advising, and problem solving for preservice teachers.

All you have to do is to sign on to the following web-site and complete the survey. It should take you 30-40 minutes maximum. Each person taking the survey is assigned an ID number. This number will only be used for data analysis procedures, not identification. I and the other people involved with my study will only see this ID number, not any names. This ensures complete privacy for you.

Directions:

- 1) Go to <http://extn.msu.montana.edu/survey/login.asp>
- 2) Sign in using *username: survey* and *password: guest*
- 3) Enter your assigned identification number.
- 4) Complete surveys, following the directions for each section.
- 5) Click on Submit, and you are finished!!

ID Number: _____
PLEASE WRITE THIS NUMBER IN A SAFE PLACE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.

Thank you again for your assistance with this project.

APPENDIX G

Pilot Test Survey Instructions

SURVEY PARTICIPATION REQUEST

Hello! My name is Katie Cooper and I am working on my Master's Degree in Agricultural Education. As part of my study, I am asking you to voluntarily take a web-based survey to help me collect data. This survey is comprised of three parts: (1) Demographics (2) Your beliefs and expectations about the first year of teaching and (3) the Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire. I would like to thank you beforehand for taking the time to assist me in this research. The results obtained from this research should help me and other professionals in the field of education make better decisions regarding teacher recruitment and retention, academic advising, and problem solving for preservice teachers.

WHEN COMPLETING THE DEMOGRAPHIC SECTION OF THE SURVEY, PLEASE DO NOT ANSWER THE FINAL QUESTION. IT PERTAINS DIRECTLY TO AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION STUDENTS ONLY.

All you have to do is to sign on to the following web-site and complete the survey. It should take you 30-40 minutes maximum. Each person taking the survey is assigned an ID number. This number will only be used for data analysis procedures, not identification. I and the other people involved with my study will only see this ID number, not any names. This ensures complete privacy for you.

Directions:

- 6) Go to <http://extn.msu.montana.edu/survey/login.asp>
- 7) Sign in using *username: survey* and *password: guest*
- 8) Enter your assigned identification number.
- 9) Complete surveys, following the directions for each section.
- 10) Click on Submit, and you are finished!!

ID Number: PT...

Thank you again for your assistance with this project.

APPENDIX H

Non-respondent Reminder e-mail

From: Katie Cooper
Sent: Tuesday, January 15, 2003 2:36 pm
To: ; mewan50@hotmail.com; maswan@wsu.edu; dhubert@cc.usu.edu;
aepals@uidaho.edu

Subject: Non-respondents

Hello again!

I hope that each of your Holiday's was wonderful.

I am writing to let you each know that I have received most of your surveys, but I am still missing a few from each of your schools. Please help me and follow up with your students one more time and ask them to complete the instruments.

Thank you again for you time and effort. Please call or respond to this e-mail if I can help you in any way.

Thank you again for your cooperation in this project and I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

Katie Cooper
AgEd Graduate Student
Montana State University

APPENDIX I

Summary of Written Responses on the Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire

Written responses for Situation 1, 2, and 3 on the AASQ

Situation Response	State						Total N=53 No. %
	Arizona n=10	Idaho n=13	Montana n=7	Oregon n=10	Utah n=7	Washington n=6	
1. You cannot get all the reading done that your instructor assigns.							
Did not like the reading	0	1	0	1	1	1	4 7.5%
Lack of ability to read at the required level	1	1	1	2	0	1	6 11.3%
Not enough time allowed	1	4	5	4	5	1	20 37.7%
Over committed	3	1	0	0	0	0	4 7.5%
Personal obligations	3	1	0	1	1	2	8 15.1%
Poor time management	1	4	1	2	0	1	9 17.0%
Too much reading assigned	1	1	0	0	0	0	2 3.8%
2. You fail a final examination							
Not enough preparation	7	8	4	7	3	3	32 60.4%
Material wasn't covered well	1	3	2	0	2	2	10 18.9%
Over committed	2	0	0	0	1	1	4 7.5%
Poor study habits	0	2	0	3	1	0	6 11.3%
Test anxiety	0	0	1	0	0	0	1 1.9%
3. You show up for a class and find to your surprise that there is a quiz.							
Lack of organization	1	1	1	4	2	2	11 20.8%
Lack of preparation	0	0	1	0	0	0	1 1.9%
Missed classes	2	0	1	1	2	0	6 11.3%
Not paying attention	2	5	4	4	0	2	17 32.1%
Poor Instruction	0	1	0	0	0		1 1.9%
Pop quiz	5	6	0	1	3	2	17 32.1%

Written response for Situations 4, 5, and 6 on the AASQ

Situation Response	State						Total N=53 No. %
	Arizona n=10	Idaho n=13	Montana n=7	Oregon n=10	Utah n=7	Washington n=6	
4. You are on academic probation.							
Administrative error	0	0	0	0	1	0	1 1.9%
Extra-curricular activities	1	2	0	1	1	0	5 9.4%
Poor study habits	1	9	7	7	2	5	31 58.5%
Learning disability	0	0	0	1	0	0	1 1.9%
Missed classes	4	1	0	0	1	0	6 11.3%
Not focused on school work	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 1.9%
Personal obligations	2	0	0	1	2	0	5 9.4%
Poor decision making	0	0	0	0	0	1	1 1.9%
Stress	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 1.9%
5. You do not have high enough grades to switch to your desired major.							
Change in program requirements	2	4	1	1	0	3	11 20.8%
Extra-curricular activities	0	1	0	0	0	0	1 1.9%
Poor study habits	6	8	3	9	6	3	35 66.0%
Learning disability	0	0	3	0	1	0	4 7.5%
Personal obligations	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 1.9%
Stress	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 1.9%
6. You cannot solve a single problem in a set of twenty assigned as homework.							
Didn't pay attention	1	1	1	2	2	0	7 13.2%
Poor study habits	1	1	0	3	0	3	8 15.1%
Material wasn't covered well	8	11	6	5	5	2	37 69.8%
Missed classes	0	0	0	0	0	1	1 1.9%

Written responses for Situations 7, 8, and 9 on the AASQ

Situation Response	State						Total N=53 No. %
	Arizona n=10	Idaho n=13	Montana n=7	Oregon n=10	Utah n=7	Washington n=6	
7. You are dropped from the university because your grades are too low.							
Extra-curricular activities	0	2	0	0	1	1	4 7.5%
Indecisive about long-term goals	1	2	2	3	0	1	9 17.0%
Missed classes	2	1	0	0	0	0	3 5.7%
Personal obligations	3	0	1	0	4	0	8 15.1%
Poor study habits	2	8	4	7	2	4	27 50.9%
Stress	2	0	0	0	0	0	2 3.8%
8. You cannot get started writing a paper.							
Distractions from surroundings.	1	1	2	5	4	3	16 30.2%
Lack of focus/interest/motivation	1	6	4	3	0	3	17 32.1%
Poor Instruction	2	0	0	0	1	0	3 5.7%
Procrastination	1	0	0	1	2	0	4 7.5%
Writers block	5	6	1	1	0	0	13 24.5%
9. You cannot find a book in the library.							
Book is checked out	5	2	2	5	3	0	17 32.1%
Didn't learn how to use the library	0	8	4	5	4	6	27 50.9%
Library is disorganized	4	1	1	0	0	0	6 11.3%
Book is out of print/circulation	1	2	0	0	0	0	3 5.7%

Written responses for Situations 10, 11, and 12 on the AASQ

Situation Response	State						Total N=53 No. %
	Arizona n=10	Idaho n=13	Montana n=7	Oregon n=10	Utah n=7	Washington n=6	
10. The required textbook for a course is unavailable in the school bookstore.							
Bookstore did not order enough	5	4	2	3	2	3	19 35.8%
Instructor did not put the order in on time	5	0	1	4	3	1	14 26.4%
Late book arrival	0	1	0	0	0	0	1 1.9%
Procrastination on my part	0	8	4	3	2	2	19 35.85
11. You get a D in a course required for your major.							
Poor study habits	4	9	4	6	3	5	31 58.5%
Difficult material	0	1	0	0	0	0	1 1.9%
Lack of interest	1	2	0	0	0	0	3 5.7%
Missed classes	0	0	1	2	2	0	5 9.4%
Personal obligations	0	0	0	2	1	0	3 5.7%
Poor Instruction	5	1	2	0	1	1	10 18.9%
12. You cannot understand the points a lecturer makes.							
Distractions from surroundings	0	0	0	0	2	1	3 5.7%
Foreign instructor	3	5	1	0	1	1	11 20.8%
Lack of preparation	0	1	3	2	0	1	7 13.2%
Learning disability	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 1.9%
Difficult or Unfamiliar material	2	2	1	2	1	2	10 18.9%
Poor Instruction	4	5	2	5	3	1	20 37.7%

APPENDIX J

StrengthsFinder® Theme Descriptions

StrengthsFinder® Theme Descriptions

ACHIEVER

Your Achiever theme helps explain your drive. Achiever describes a constant need for achievement. You feel as if every day starts at zero. By the end of the day you must achieve something tangible in order to feel good about yourself. And by "every day," you mean every single day--workdays, weekends, vacations. No matter how much you may feel you deserve a day of rest, if the day passes without some form of achievement, no matter how small, you will feel dissatisfied. You have an internal fire burning inside of you. It pushes you to do more, to achieve more. After each accomplishment is reached, the fire dwindles for a moment, but very soon it rekindles itself, forcing you toward the next accomplishment. Your relentless need for achievement might not be logical. It might not even be focused. But, it will always be with you. As an Achiever you must learn to live with this whisper of discontent. It does have its benefits. It brings you the energy you need to work long hours without burning out. It is the jolt you can always count on to get you started on new tasks, new challenges. It is the power supply that causes you to set the pace and define the levels of productivity for your work group. It is the theme that keeps you moving.

ACTIVATOR

"When can we start?" This is a recurring question in your life. You are impatient for action. You may concede that analysis has its uses or that debate and discussion can occasionally yield some valuable insights, but deep down you know that only action is real. Only action can make things happen. Only action leads to performance. Once a decision is made, you cannot not act. Others may worry that "there are still some things we don't know," but this doesn't seem to slow you. If the decision has been made to go across town, you know that the fastest way to get there is to go stoplight to stoplight. You are not going to sit around waiting until all the lights have turned green. Besides, in your view, action and thinking are not opposites. In fact, guided by your Activator theme, you believe that action is the best device for learning. You make a decision, you take action, you look at the result, and you learn. This learning informs your next action and your next. How can you grow if you have nothing to react to? Well, you believe you can't. You must put yourself out there. You must take the next step. It is the only to keep your thinking fresh and informed. The bottom line is this: You know you will be judged not by what you say, not by what you think, but by what you get done. This does not frighten you. It pleases you.

ADAPTABILITY

You live in the moment. You don't see the future as a fixed destination. Instead, you see it as a place that you create out of the choices that you make right now. And so you discover your future one choice at a time. This doesn't mean that you don't have plans. You probably do. But this theme of Adaptability does enable you to respond willingly to the demands of the moment even if they pull you away from your plans. Unlike some, you don't resent sudden requests or unforeseen detours. You expect them. They are

inevitable. Indeed, on some level you actually look forward to them. You are, at heart, a very flexible person who can stay productive when the demands of work are pulling you in many different directions at once.

ANALYTICAL

Your Analytical theme challenges other people: "Prove it. Show me why what you are claiming is true." In the face of this kind of questioning some will find that their brilliant theories wither and die. For you, this is precisely the point. You do not necessarily want to destroy other people's ideas, but you do insist that their theories be sound. You see yourself as objective and dispassionate. You like data because they are value free. They have no agenda. Armed with these data, you search for patterns and connections. You want to understand how certain patterns affect one another. How do they combine? What is their outcome? Does this outcome fit with the theory being offered or the situation being confronted? These are your questions. You peel the layers back until, gradually, the root cause or causes are revealed. Others see you as logical and rigorous. Over time they will come to you in order to expose someone's "wishful thinking" or "clumsy thinking" to your refining mind. It is hoped that your analysis will not be delivered too harshly. Otherwise, others may avoid you when that "wishful thinking" is their own.

ARRANGER

You are a juggler. When faced with a complex situation involving many factors, you enjoy managing all of the variables, aligning and realigning them until you are sure that you have arranged them in the most productive configuration possible. In your mind there is nothing special about what you are doing. You are simply trying to figure out the best way to get things done. But others, lacking this theme, will be in awe of your ability. "How can you keep so many things in your head at once?" they will ask. "How can you stay so flexible, so willing to shelve well-laid plans in favor of some brand-new configuration that has just occurred to you?" But you cannot imagine behaving in any other way. You are a shining example of effective flexibility, whether you are changing travel schedules at the last minute because a better fare has popped up or mulling over just the right combination of people and resources to accomplish a new project. From the mundane to the complex, you are always looking for the perfect configuration. Of course, you are at your best in dynamic situations. Confronted with the unexpected, some complain that plans devised with such care cannot be changed, while others take refuge in the existing rules or procedures. You don't do either. Instead you jump into the confusion, devising new options, hunting for new paths of least resistance, and figuring out new partnerships--because, after all, there might just be a better way.

BELIEF

If you possess a strong Belief theme, you have certain core values that are enduring. These values vary from one person to another, but ordinarily your Belief causes you to be family-oriented, altruistic, even spiritual, and to value responsibility and high ethics--both in yourself and others. These core values affect your behavior in many ways. They give your life meaning and satisfaction; in your view, success is more than money and

prestige. They provide you with direction, guiding you through the temptations and distractions of life toward a consistent set of priorities. This consistency is the foundation for all your relationships. Your friends call you dependable. "I know where you stand," they say. Your Belief makes you easy to trust. It also demands that you find work that meshes with your values. Your work must be meaningful; it must matter to you. And guided by your Belief theme it will only matter if it gives you a chance to live out your values.

COMMAND

Command leads you to take charge. Unlike some people, you feel no discomfort with imposing your views on others. On the contrary, once your opinion is formed, you need to share it with others. Once your goal is set, you feel restless until you have aligned others with you. You are not frightened by confrontation; rather, you know that confrontation is the first step toward resolution. Whereas others may avoid facing up to life's unpleasantness, you feel compelled to present the facts or the truth, no matter how unpleasant it may be. You need things to be clear between people and challenge them to be clear-eyed and honest. You push them to take risks. You may even intimidate them. And while some may resent this, labeling you opinionated, they often willingly hand you the reins. People are drawn toward those who take a stance and ask them to move in a certain direction. Therefore, people will be drawn toward you. You have presence. You have Command.

COMMUNICATION

You like to explain, to describe, to host, to speak in public, and to write. This is your Communication theme at work. Ideas are a dry beginning. Events are static. You feel a need to bring them to life, to energize them, to make them exciting and vivid. And so you turn events into stories and practice telling them. You take the dry idea and enliven it with images and examples and metaphors. You believe that most people have a very short attention span. They are bombarded by information, but very little of it survives. You want your information--whether an idea, an event, a product's features and benefits, a discovery, or a lesson--to survive. You want to divert their attention toward you and then capture it, lock it in. This is what drives your hunt for the perfect phrase. This is what draws you toward dramatic words and powerful word combinations. This is why people like to listen to you. Your word pictures pique their interest, sharpen their world, and inspire them to act.

COMPETITION

Competition is rooted in comparison. When you look at the world, you are instinctively aware of other people's performance. Their performance is the ultimate yardstick. No matter how hard you tried, no matter how worthy your intentions, if you reached your goal but did not outperform your peers the achievement feels hollow. Like all competitors, you need other people. You need to compare. If you can compare, you can compete, and if you can compete, you can win. And if you win, there is no feeling quite like it. You like measurement because it facilitates comparisons. You like other

competitors because they invigorate you. You like contests because they must produce a winner. You particularly like contests where you know you have the inside track to be the winner. Although you are gracious to your fellow competitors and even stoic in defeat, you don't compete for the fun of competing. You compete to win. Over time, you will come to avoid contests where winning seems unlikely.

CONNECTEDNESS

Things happen for a reason. You are sure of it. You are sure of it because in your soul you know that we are all connected. Yes, we are individuals, responsible for our own judgments and in possession of our own free will, but nonetheless we are part of something larger. Some may call it the collective unconscious. Others may label it spirit or life force. But whatever your word of choice, you gain confidence from knowing that we are not isolated from one another or from the earth and the life on it. This feeling of Connectedness implies certain responsibilities. If we are all part of a larger picture, then we must not harm because we will be harming ourselves. We must not exploit because we will be exploiting ourselves. Your awareness of these responsibilities creates your value system. You are considerate, caring, and accepting. Certain of the unity of humankind, you are a bridge builder for people of different cultures. Sensitive to the invisible hand, you can give others comfort that there is a purpose beyond our humdrum lives. The exact articles of your faith will depend upon your upbringing and your culture, but your faith is strong. It sustains you and your close friends in the face of life's mysteries.

CONTEXT

You look back. You look back because that is where the answers lie. You look back to understand the present. From your vantage point the present is unstable, a confusing clamor of competing voices. It is only by casting your mind back to an earlier time, a time when the plans were being drawn up, that the present regains its stability. The earlier time was a simpler time. It was a time of blueprints. As you look back, you begin to see these blueprints emerge. You realize what the initial intentions were. These blueprints or intentions have since become so embellished that they are almost unrecognizable, but now this Context theme reveals them again. This understanding brings you confidence. No longer disoriented, you make better decisions because you sense the underlying structure. You become a better partner because you understand how your colleagues came to be who they are. And counterintuitively you become wiser about the future because you see its seeds being sown in the past. Faced with new people and new situations, it will take you a little time to orient yourself, but you must give yourself this time. You must discipline yourself to ask the questions and allow the blueprints to emerge because no matter what the situation, if you haven't seen the blueprints, you will have less confidence in your decisions.

DELIBERATIVE

You are careful. You are vigilant. You are quite a private person. You know that the world is an unpredictable place. Everything may seem in order, but beneath the surface,

you sense the many risks. Rather than denying these risks, you draw each one out into the open. There each risk can be identified, assessed, and ultimately reduced. Thus, you are a fairly serious person who approaches life with a certain reserve. For example, you like to plan ahead so as to anticipate what might go wrong. You select your friends cautiously and keep your own counsel when the conversation turns to personal matters. You are careful not to give too much praise and recognition, lest it be misconstrued. If some people don't like you because you are not as effusive as others, then so be it. For you, life is not a popularity contest. Life is something of a minefield. Others can run through it recklessly if they so choose. But you take a different approach. You identify the dangers, weigh their relative impact, and then place your feet deliberately. You walk with care.

DEVELOPER

You see the potential in others. Very often, in fact, potential is all you see. In your view no individual is fully formed. On the contrary, each individual is a work in progress, alive with possibilities. And you are drawn toward people for this very reason. When you interact with others, your goal is to help them experience success. You look for ways to challenge them. You devise interesting experiences that can stretch them and help them grow. And all the while you are on the lookout for the signs of growth--a new behavior learned or modified, a slight improvement in a skill, a glimpse of excellence or of "flow" where previously there were only halting steps. For you these small increments--invisible to some--are clear signs of potential being realized. These signs of growth in others are your fuel. They bring you strength and satisfaction. Over time many will seek you out for help and encouragement because on some level they know that your helpfulness is both genuine and fulfilling to you.

DISCIPLINE

Your world needs to be predictable. It needs to be ordered and planned. So you instinctively impose structure upon your world. You set up routines. You focus on timelines and deadlines. You break long-term projects into a series of specific, short-term plans, and you work through each plan diligently. You are not necessarily neat and clean, but you do need precision. Faced with the inherent messiness of life, you want to feel in control. The routines, the timelines, the structure: all of these help to create this feeling of control. Lacking this theme of Discipline, others may sometimes resent your need for order, but there need not be conflict. You must understand that not everyone feels your urge for predictability; they have other ways of getting things done. Likewise you can help them understand and even appreciate your need for structure. Your dislike of surprises, your impatience with errors, your routines, and your detail orientation don't need to be misinterpreted as controlling behaviors that box people in. Rather, these behaviors can be understood as your instinctive method for maintaining your progress and your productivity in the face of life's many distractions.

EMPATHY

You can sense the emotions of those around you. You can feel what they are feeling as though their feelings are your own. Intuitively, you are able to see the world through their

eyes and share their perspective. You do not necessarily agree with each person's perspective. You do not necessarily feel pity for each person's predicament--this would be sympathy, not empathy. You do not necessarily condone the choices each person makes, but you do understand. This instinctive ability to understand is powerful. You hear the unvoiced questions. You anticipate the need. Where others grapple for words, you seem to find the right words and the right tone. You help people find the right phrases to express their feelings--to themselves as well as to others. You help them give voice to their emotional life. For all these reasons other people are drawn toward you.

FAIRNESS

Balance is important to you. You are keenly aware of the need to treat people the same, no matter what their station in life, so, you do not want to see the scales tipped too far in any one person's favor. In your view, this leads to selfishness and individualism. It leads to a world where some people gain an unfair advantage because of their connections or their background or their greasing of the wheels. This is truly offensive to you. You see yourself as a guardian against it. In direct contrast to this world of special favors, you believe that people function best in a consistent environment where the rules are clear and are applied to everyone equally. This is an environment where people know what is expected. It is predictable and evenhanded. It is fair. Here each person will have an even chance to show his or her worth.

FOCUS

"Where am I headed?" you ask yourself. You ask this question every day. Guided by this theme of Focus, you need a clear destination. Lacking one, your life and your work can quickly become frustrating. And so each year, each month, and even each week you set goals. These goals then serve as your compass, helping you to determine priorities and make the necessary corrections to get back on course. Your Focus is powerful because it forces you to filter; you instinctively evaluate whether or not a particular action will help you move toward your goal. Those that don't are ignored. In the end, then, your Focus forces you to be efficient. Naturally, the flip side of this is that it causes you to become impatient with delays, obstacles, and even tangents, no matter how intriguing they appear to be. This makes you an extremely valuable team member. When others start to wander down other avenues, you bring them back to the main road. Your Focus reminds everyone that if something is not helping you all move toward your destination, then it is not important. And if it is not important, then it is not worth your time. You keep everyone on point.

FUTURISTIC

"Wouldn't it be great if . . ." You are the kind of person who loves to peer over the horizon. The future fascinates you. As if it were projected on the wall, you see in detail what the future might hold. This detailed picture keeps pulling you forward, into tomorrow. While the exact content of the picture will depend on your other strengths and interests--a better product, a better team, a better life, or a better world--it will always be

inspirational to you. You are a dreamer who sees visions of what could be and who cherishes these visions. When the present proves too frustrating and the people around you too pragmatic, you conjure up your visions of the future and they energize you. They can energize others, too. In fact, very often people will look to you to describe your visions of the future. They want a picture that can raise their sights and thereby their spirits. You can paint it for them. Practice. Choose your words carefully. Make it as vivid as possible. People will want to latch on to the hope you bring.

HARMONY

You look for areas of agreement. In your view there is little to be gained from conflict and friction, so you seek to hold them to a minimum. When you know the people around you hold differing views, you try to find the common ground. You try to steer them away from confrontation and toward harmony. In fact, harmony is one of your guiding values. You can't quite believe how much time is wasted by people trying to impose their views on others. Wouldn't we all be more productive if we kept our opinions in check and instead looked for consensus and support? You believe we would' and you live by that belief. When others are sounding off about their goals, their claims, and their fervently held opinions, you hold your peace. When others strike out in a direction, you will willingly, in the service of harmony, modify your own objectives to merge with theirs (as long as their basic values do not clash with yours). When others start to argue about their pet theory or concept, you steer clear of the debate, preferring to talk about practical, down-to-earth matters on which you can all agree. In your view we are all in the same boat, and we need this boat to get where we are going. It is a good boat. There is no need to rock it just to show that you can.

IDEATION

You are fascinated by ideas. What is an idea? An idea is a concept, the best explanation of the most events. You are delighted when you discover beneath the complex surface an elegantly simple concept to explain why things are the way they are. An idea is a connection. Yours is the kind of mind that is always looking for connections, so you are intrigued when seemingly disparate phenomena can be linked by an obscure connection. An idea is a new perspective on familiar challenges. You revel in taking the world we all know and turning it around so we can view it from a strange--but strangely enlightening angle. You love all these ideas because they are profound' because they are novel, because they are clarifying, because they are contrary, because they are bizarre. For all of these reasons, you derive a jolt of energy whenever a new idea occurs to you. Others may label you as creative or original or conceptual or even smart. Perhaps you are all of these. Who can be sure? What you are sure of is that ideas are thrilling. And on most days this is enough.

INCLUSIVENESS

"Stretch the circle wider." This is the philosophy around which you orient your life. You want to include people and make them feel part of the group. In direct contrast to those who are drawn only to exclusive groups, you actively avoid those groups that exclude

others. You want to expand the group so that as many people as possible can benefit from its support. You hate the sight of someone on the outside looking in. You want to draw them so that they can feel the warmth of the group. You are an instinctively accepting person. Regardless of race or sex or nationality or personality or faith, you cast few judgments. Judgments can hurt a person's feelings. Why do that if you don't have to? Your accepting nature does not necessarily rest upon a belief that each of us is different and that one should respect these differences. Rather, it rests upon your conviction that fundamentally we are all the same. We are all equally important. Thus, no one should be ignored. Each of us should be included. It is the least we all deserve.

INDIVIDUALIZATION

Your Individualization theme leads you to be intrigued by the unique qualities of each person. You are impatient with generalizations or "types" because you don't want to obscure what is special and distinct about each person. Instead, you focus on the differences between individuals. You instinctively observe each person's style, each person's motivation, how each thinks, how each builds relationships. You hear the one-of-a-kind stories in each person's life. This theme explains why you pick your friends just the right birthday gift, why you know that one person prefers praise in public and another detests it, and why you tailor your teaching style to accommodate one person's need to be shown and another's desire to "figure it out as I go." Because you are such a keen observer of other people's strengths, you can draw out the best in each person. This Individualization theme also helps you build productive teams. While some search around for the perfect team "structure" or "process," you know instinctively that the secret to great teams is the casting by individual strengths so that everyone can do a lot of what they do well.

INPUT

You are inquisitive. You collect things. You might collect information--words, facts, books, and quotations--or you might collect tangible objects such as butterflies, baseball cards, porcelain dolls, or sepia photographs. Whatever you collect, you collect it because it interests you. And yours is the kind of mind that finds so many things interesting. The world is exciting precisely because of its infinite variety and complexity. If you read a great deal, it is not necessarily to refine your theories but, rather, to add more information to your archives. If you like to travel, it is because each new location offers novel artifacts and facts. These can be acquired and then stored away. Why are they worth storing? At the time of storing it is often hard to say exactly when or why you might need them but who knows when they might become useful? With all those possible uses in mind, you really don't feel comfortable throwing anything away. So you keep acquiring and compiling and filing stuff away. It's interesting. It keeps your mind fresh. And one day some of it will prove valuable.

INTELLECTION

You like to think. You like mental activity. You like exercising the "muscles" of your brain, stretching them in multiple directions. This need for mental activity may be

focused; for example, you may be trying to solve a problem or develop an idea or understand another person's feelings. The exact focus will depend upon your other strengths. On the other hand, this mental activity may very well lack focus. The theme of Intellection does not dictate what you are thinking about; it simply describes that you like to think. You are the kind of person who enjoys your time alone, because it is your time for musing and reflection. You are introspective. In a sense, you are your own best companion, as you pose yourself questions and try out answers on yourself to see how they sound. This introspection may lead you to a slight sense of discontentment as you compare what you are actually doing with all the thoughts and ideas that your mind conceives. Or this introspection may tend toward more pragmatic matters such as the events of the day or a conversation that you plan to have later. Wherever it leads you, this mental hum is one of the constants of your life.

LEARNER

You love to learn. The subject matter that interests you most will be determined by your other themes and experiences, but whatever the subject, you will always be drawn to the process of learning. The process, more than the content or the result, is especially exciting for you. You are energized by the steady and deliberate journey from ignorance to competence. The thrill of the first few facts, the early efforts to recite or practice what you have learned, the growing confidence of a skill mastered--this is the process that entices you. Your excitement leads you to engage in adult learning experiences--yoga or piano lessons or graduate classes at the local college. It enables you to thrive in dynamic work environments where you are asked to take on short project assignments and are expected to learn a lot about the new subject matter in a short period of time and then move on to the next one. This Learner theme does not necessarily mean that you seek to become the subject matter expert, or that you are striving for the respect that accompanies a professional or academic credential. The outcome of the learning is less significant than the "getting there."

MAXIMIZER

Excellence, not average, is your measure. Taking something from below average to slightly above average takes a great deal of effort and in your opinion is not very rewarding. Transforming something strong into something superb takes just as much effort but it is so much more thrilling. Strengths, whether yours or someone else's, fascinate you. Like a diver after pearls, you search them out, watching for the telltale signs of a strength. A glimpse of untutored excellence, rapid learning, a skill mastered without recourse to steps--all these are clues that a strength may be in play. And having found a strength, you feel compelled to nurture it, refine it, and stretch it toward excellence. You polish the pearl until it shines. This natural sorting of strengths means that others see you as discriminating. You choose to spend time with people who appreciate your particular strengths. Likewise, you are attracted to others who seem to have found and cultivated their own strengths. You tend to avoid those who want to fix you and make you well rounded. You don't want to spend your life bemoaning what you

lack. Rather, you want to capitalize on the gifts with which you were blessed. It's more fun. It's more productive. And, counterintuitively, it is more demanding.

POSITIVITY

You are generous with praise, quick to smile, and always on the lookout for the positive in the situation. Some call you lighthearted. Others just wish that their glass were as full as yours seems to be. But either way, people want to be around you. Their world looks better around you because your enthusiasm is contagious. Lacking your energy and optimism, some find their world drab with repetition or, worse, heavy with pressure. You seem to find a way to lighten their spirit. You inject drama into every project. You find ways to make everything more exciting and more vital. Some cynics may reject your energy, but you are rarely dragged down. Your Positivity won't allow it. Somehow you can't quite escape your conviction that it is good to be alive, that work can be fun, and that no matter what the setbacks, one must never lose one's sense of humor.

RELATOR

Relator describes your attitude toward your relationships. In simple terms, the Relator theme pulls you toward people you already know. You do not necessarily shy away from meeting new people--in fact, you may have other themes that cause you to enjoy the thrill of turning strangers into friends--but you do derive a great deal of pleasure and strength from being around your close friends. You are comfortable with intimacy. In fact, once the initial connection has been made, you deliberately encourage a deepening of the relationship. You want to understand their feelings, their goals, their fears and their dreams; and you want them to understand yours. You know that this kind of closeness implies a certain amount of risk--you might be taken advantage of--but you are willing to accept that risk. For you a relationship has value only if it is genuine. And the only way to know that is to entrust yourself to the other person. The more you share with each other, the more you risk together. The more you risk together, the more each of you can prove your caring is genuine. These are your steps toward real friendship, and you take them willingly.

RESPONSIBILITY

Your Responsibility theme forces you to take psychological ownership for anything you commit to, and whether large or small, you feel emotionally bound to follow it through to completion. Your good name depends on it. If for some reason you cannot deliver, you automatically start to look for ways to make it up to the other person. Apologies are not enough. Excuses and rationalizations are totally unacceptable. You will not quite be able to live with yourself until you have made restitution. This conscientiousness, this near obsession for doing things right, and your impeccable ethics, combine to create your reputation: utterly dependable. When assigning new responsibilities, people will look to you first because they know it will get done. When people come to you for help--and they soon will--you must be selective. Your willingness to volunteer may sometimes lead you to take on more than you should.

RESTORATIVE

You love to solve problems. Whereas some are dismayed when they encounter yet another breakdown, you can be energized by it. You enjoy the challenge of analyzing the symptoms, identifying what is wrong, and finding the solution. You may prefer practical problems or conceptual ones or personal ones. You may seek out specific kinds of problems that you have met many times before and that you are confident you can fix. Or you may feel the greatest push when faced with complex and unfamiliar problems. Your exact preferences are determined by your other strengths and experiences. But what is certain is that you enjoy bringing things back to life. It is a wonderful feeling to identify the undermining factor(s), eradicate them, and restore something to its true glory. Intuitively, you know that without your intervention, this thing--this machine, this technique, this person, this company--might have ceased to function. You fixed it, resuscitated it, rekindled its vitality. Phrasing it the way you might, you saved it.

SELF-ASSURANCE

Self-Assurance is similar to self-confidence. In the deepest part of you, you have faith in your strengths. You know that you are able--able to take risks, able to meet new challenges, able to stake claims, and, most important, able to deliver. But Self-Assurance is more than just self-confidence. Blessed with the theme of Self-Assurance, you have confidence not only in your abilities but in your judgment. When you look at the world, you know that your perspective is unique and distinct. And because no one sees exactly what you see, you know that no one can ever make your decisions for you; no one can tell you what to think. They can guide. They can suggest. But you alone have the authority to form conclusions, make decisions, and act. This authority, this final accountability for the living of your life, does not intimidate you. On the contrary, it feels natural to you. No matter what the situation, you seem to know what the right decision is. This theme lends you an aura of certainty. Unlike many, you are not easily swayed by someone else's arguments, no matter how persuasive they may be. This Self-Assurance may be quiet or loud, depending on your other themes, but it is solid. It is strong. Like the keel of a ship, it withstands many different pressures and keeps you on your course.

SIGNIFICANCE

You want to be very significant in the eyes of other people. In the truest sense of the word you want to be recognized. You want to be heard. You want to stand out. You want to be known. In particular, you want to be known and appreciated for the unique strengths you bring. You feel a need to be admired as credible, professional, and successful. Likewise, you want to associate with others who are credible, professional, and successful. And if they aren't, you will push them to achieve until they are. Or you will move on. An independent spirit, you want your work to be a way of life rather than a job, and in that work you want to be given free rein, the leeway to do things your way. Your yearnings feel intense to you, and you honor those yearnings. And so your life is filled with goals, achievements, or qualifications that you crave. Whatever your focus--and each person is distinct--your Significance theme will keep pulling you upward, away from the mediocre toward the exceptional. It is the theme that keeps you reaching.

STRATEGIC

The Strategic theme enables you to sort through the clutter and find the best route. It is not a skill that can be taught. It is a distinct way of thinking, a special perspective on the world at large. This perspective allows you to see patterns where others simply see complexity. Mindful of these patterns, you play out alternative scenarios, always asking, "What if this happened? Okay, well what if this happened?" This recurring question helps you see around the next corner. There you can evaluate accurately the potential obstacles. Guided by where you see each path leading, you start to make selections. You discard the paths that lead nowhere. You discard the paths that lead straight into resistance. You discard the paths that lead into a fog of confusion. You cull and make selections until you arrive at the chosen path--your strategy. Armed with your strategy, you strike forward. This is your Strategic theme at work: "What if?" Select. Strike.

WOO

Woo stands for winning others over. You enjoy the challenge of meeting new people and getting them to like you. Strangers are rarely intimidating to you. On the contrary, strangers can be energizing. You are drawn to them. You want to learn their names, ask them questions, and find some areas of common interest so that you can strike up a conversation and build rapport. Some people shy away from starting up conversations because they worry about running out of things to say. You don't. Not only are you rarely at a loss for words, but you actually enjoy the risk of initiating with strangers because you derive satisfaction from breaking the ice and making a connection. Once that connection is made, you are quite happy to wrap it up and move on. There are new people to meet, new rooms to work, new crowds to mingle in. In your world there are no strangers, only friends you haven't met yet--lots of them.

APPENDIX K

StrengthsFinder® Theme Frequencies by State

StrengthsFinder® theme frequencies by state

Strength	State														
	Arizona n=10					Idaho n=13					Montana n=7				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Achiever	4	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Activator	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Adaptability	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Analytical	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arranger	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Belief	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Command	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Communication	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
Competition	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Connectedness	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Consistency	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Context	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Developer	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Deliberative	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Discipline	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Empathy	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Focus	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Futuristic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harmony	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Ideation	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Includer	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Individualization	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Intellection	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Input	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Learner	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0
Maximizer	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Positivity	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
Relator	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Responsibility	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Restorative	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Self-Assurance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Significance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strategic	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Woo	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0

Strength	State														
	Oregon n=10					Utah n=7					Washington n=6				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Achiever	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	
Activator	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Adaptability	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Analytical	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	
Arranger	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	
Belief	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	
Command	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Communication	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Competition	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Connectedness	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Consistency	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
Context	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Developer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Deliberative	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	
Discipline	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
Empathy	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Focus	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Futuristic	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Harmony	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	
Ideation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Includer	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Individualization	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Intellection	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Input	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	
Learner	1	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	
Maximizer	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Positivity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	
Relator	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	
Responsibility	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Restorative	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Self-Assurance	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	
Significance	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Strategic	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Woo	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	